

A CASTLE IN SPAIN.

I HAD mounted an omnibus on the Boulevard Rousseau and comfortably seated myself in a corner of the dimly lighted vehicle.

A pale-faced girl sat at my side, and her marble cheeks glistened with tears. Sympathy is not my strong point. When I was a young man distress dissolved me like the sunbeam pierces the dew-drop and translates its vapor to the sky. Misery always made the wings of my soul flutter, and I felt at once a struggle to rise to the heroic. But now I am old and the frost of years is on my feelings like the locked lid on a family chest of silver.

But those tearful eyes rolled in their liquid loveliness, and their light shone like a shaft of burnished metal.

"What ails you?" I asked kindly.

"Me? Nothing. I weep for my brother."

Her unselfishness robbed her in the garb of a heroine. I wanted to know more.

"Where is your brother?"

"At home. Very sick."

She had asked the conductor to stop at the Place Molière, and was about to alight, when I carried a small bundle to the street and asked to be allowed to go to her brother.

Across this wide esplanade, dedicated to the memory of dramatic genius, there is an abrupt turn in the street that leads to a large building of stone. It is a dreary structure, the fitting abode of present misery, as it had been of past crime. Here the phoenix of the Revolution expired in the fires of its ferocity, to rise again and again from its ashes and spread gloom and rapine and eternal wrong.

The girl's foot-fall seemed a signal for a light at the upper window, which cautiously opened.

"Who is there?" asked a trembling and an aged voice.

"Only Clarette, mother."

I felt easier when I heard that golden word.

Wherever is a mother the angel of mercy is with her. She is never alone.

We entered a room at the end of the hallway.

The brother, pallid, weak, seemed to be fading from the earth like a beautiful flower that a rude wind had withered. It was Youth in the embrace of Love, passing to the arms of Death. Never a strong child, a fever had sapped his strength and was now loosening the ties of life.

I scrutinized the fading features; gentleness of a woman blended with a masculine look of purpose. Ambition was graven on the broad brow, and the lips denoted purity of thought. All is not yet lost. I will save this boy. Ambition, hope, faith, that are imaged in your noble face, shall be for thee and for the waiting world, to bless it. I, who for all these years had lived for myself alone, whose life had been an air-bubble floating with the mote in the sunbeam, realized that I had been a blank page in a volume of fifty-seven chapters.

Philanthropy seized me like a fever. I wanted to do good at every turn. A young doctor, poor and struggling, gladly and promptly answered my call. A druggist who was striving to own his store filled the prescriptions. There was hope, the doctor told us. When he left in the gray of the following dawn, his words of cheer were more glowing to our hearts than the reappearing sun.

A few weeks' constant care had restored the ebbing strength, and the boy brightened like a tree fed by the waters of a brook.

My visits were daily. I forgot myself. I did not quarrel with the waiter that the Burgundy was too warm.

My dyspepsia had disappeared. In the streets, at the table, by my bed, I

saw a trinity brighter to me than the theologist's glory—goodness, gratitude and love. I who laughed at day dreams dreamed on when the noon-day beam gilded the obscurest corner. I could see that boy, so fair to look upon, winning laurels, gaining fortune. I could see him walking with his sister in cathedral aisles to link her life to the youth she had loved when poverty made havoc of the hope and despair had burnt her soul till its inner shell was like a charred and ashen tree.

The mother, too, rested at their side, with a loving child at either arm supporting the fading form now worn with the strife for those she loved.

When the summer days warmed the air and filled it with perfume from the wild flowers and golden radiance from the blue sky, the dimness and the stillness of the winter's woe, and all was joy where had been tears, the light and love of their hearts shone like a torch in the dark and empty corridors of my dreary existence.

A violent shake of my arm aroused me. I looked around. Dierbon, my old companion in cards and cheer, wanted to know what ailed me.

"You have been in a trance."

"I really dreamed that I was doing good."

"Thank God it was only a dream!" was the reply.

We went down into the gay streets, into the wakeful world.

A flower-girl offered a bunch of blushing roses for only fifty centimes.

"Don't bother us!"

"Kind sir, I have a child dying at home. A little—a little—help."

The voice seemed to be dying, too, with the spirit of the child.

"What did that woman want?"

"Oh! I never hear them."

We crossed to the Eden Theater.

"There's Clotilde Passevert."

"Did she acknowledge your diamond nosegay?"

"She never thanks."

Edward Lande.

A COUPLE OF CALLS.

“HOW do you do, Katy? Is Miss Marv at home?”

Katy thought she was, but was not sure. She would go and see. While she was gone David Carpenter sat down and thought over for the twentieth time the good fortune which had come to him that day. He felt like a boy who had won a pocketful of marbles.

“Well, Mary, I’ve got my wooden bowl at last!” he cried, as Miss Owen came into the room.

“What do you mean?” Mary paused half way between him and the door.

“I mean that I’m Corporation Counsel of the B. B. & F., with a salary of seven thousand dollars a year.”

“I’m sorry to hear it,” said Mary.

David’s smile died away. He felt that he had asked for a fish and had been given a stone. He tried to smile again, and looked vexed instead.

“That’s a kind thing to say,” he observed.

“What I mean is this,” said Mary, her large gray eyes looking steadily at her old friend. “There’s no fear that you won’t succeed in time. You’re the most talented man I ever saw, except Edward Calthrop, whom you affect to despise so much. But I don’t think you’ve had trials enough yet. Why, you’ll never know what it is to struggle with poverty any more; that’s a pity, a great pity. You see I’m perfectly frank.”

“I certainly don’t think you’ve been over anxious to spare my feelings.”

Mary smiled. She had large features and very expensive ones. When she smiled, it was as much as two ordinary smiles.

“Nonsense,” she said. “What good does it do to spare each other’s feelings? We were put into this world to help each other along, not to tell each other we’d gone far enough already.”

“You don’t approve of a kindly slap on the back once in a while?”

“Yes, when a man’s down. But you’re up.

“I’m not up now.” There was a pause. The pleasant light was gone from David’s rather dangerous looking black eyes. He had a face that looked as if it had been chiselled out of granite. As he leaned forward and spoke to Mary, a child might have seen that the B. B. & F. would get their money’s worth in a man like that.

“To tell you the truth, Mary,” he said, after looking at her in silence till she wondered if she could look at him any more, his eyes were so stern, “I think you’ve been talking like a fool. I came in here happy as a boy, and, as you say, on the top of the wave, and wanting my old friend to wish me joy of my new place, and in five minutes you’ve got me back to my hard old matter of fact self by saying something which you think rather fine, and which anyone can see is extremely unkind. I’m seldom in good spirits, and when I am I shall know where not to go. I’ll tell you one of my rules of business; it’s this: Don’t say anything unless good is going to come of it. What good could come of your remark is something which I’m glad I haven’t got to find out. You’re one of my best friends, Mary, and I think you’re really attached to me: but when I want sympathy I should as soon think of going out in front of the house and confiding in our old stone post.”

The tears came into Mary’s eyes. She was silent.

It was at this moment, perhaps an opportune one, that Mrs. Owen came into the room:

“What, Mary, not ready for the theatre yet?” she said. “It’s almost eight o’clock. Why, Mr. Carpenter, I am so glad to see you! I’m sorry we haven’t an extra ticket. It looks so inhospitable;” and she rattled on.

Mr. Owen came in too, and Mary went upstairs to put on her things. When she came back Mrs. Owens was still talking, David pretending to listen, and Mr. Owen reading the evening paper. Then the three theatre goers went out with more apologies, and when their footsteps died away David went out after them. He tripped on something at the threshold and fell down the front steps, tearing his clothes. When he got up he laughed dismally at this unnecessary excess of misfortune.

"What a successful evening," he said under his breath as he walked away. He was light-hearted when he entered the house; irritated and cross when he came out. It makes very little difference at the end of a mile run how you felt before you began.

As soon as David had heard the theatre mentioned at the Owens' he had thought:

"Then I'll go to see Violet Anderson."

So, in spite of the triangular tear in his trousers, which was after all but microscopic, he found himself walking toward the Anderson house without any conscious volition. It was a warm evening in May. Fret as he might, the peaceful stillness, the breath of spring, the kind glances of the stars just appearing in the not yet darkened sky could not fail to have an effect on him. Pleasant thoughts came back: the struggling past, the successful present, the glorious future. Violet would not receive him as Mary had done. He rather thought he liked Violet better than any girl he knew: Violet or Mary, and Mary's ideas were too much like a man's. She had a splendid mind, but after all it is nice to have women feminine. And they ought to be fond of music! Mary could not tell one tune from another, whereas Violet—perhaps she would sing to-night. When a man was married it would be nice to have someone to sing to him when he came home from battling with the world,—and beating it, David added, throwing out his chest. He did not want to come home and argue and get cross

and be told that success was a bad thing. He smiled at this last idea, and also at a pleasant contrast which suggested itself next.

Violet was sitting on the steps of the front porch near her father and mother, when David made his appearance. He smiled as he saw the perfect taste and elegance of her simple summer dress, and contrasted it with some unfortunately inharmonious colors which he had seen not long ago. After shaking hands all round, he sat down next to Violet. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson set out to make a call, leaving the young people alone. The gentle south wind carried to them the fragrance of the lilacs in a neighboring garden. In the next street children were still playing, though it was high time they were in bed, and their voices were wafted to David and Violet softened by the distance. It was one of those evenings when somehow one finds no difficulty in loving one's neighbor. David found none.

"How did you like staying at the Collamores?" asked David. "Are young married people agreeable at home?"

"I didn't have an especially good time," Violet replied; "but they did. Do you know, I rather envied them, and wished I was married or engaged or something?"

If "something" stood for "in love," David began to feel as if he were "something."

It was pleasant to sit in silence; but it was pleasanter still to hear Violet's voice on the night air. So he spoke to her again, merely that she might answer him.

"The only trouble with being married or engaged is that you must be married or engaged to some one."

"And you think I shall find difficulty in bringing any one to the point?" she inquired, smiling.

He could not help being embarrassed. "No, I don't mean that. Only I thought you might feel like being in love, and yet not know any one you cared for in that way."

She half rose from the piazza step,

and adjusted her dress so as to sit more comfortably. "I think I shall be able to find one," she said.

Her reply set him thinking. But you cannot think reasonably about a beautiful girl of twenty when she is sitting next you on a piazza step. David was conscious of a certain absurdity in the attempt.

"Won't you sing to me, Violet?" he asked.

The piano was close by the long glass door opening on the piazza. "If you're obedient," she said, rising. "Sit perfectly still, and don't move a muscle except to say it was pretty when I've finished."

He had asked her to sing so as to give himself a chance to think while she was singing. If he wanted to think favorably of her this was an excellent plan. Violet had an exquisite taste in all things, and she sang a few soft ballads and one quiet song of Schubert's that harmonized as well as the lilacs, and her own violets with the stillness and beauty of the evening. When she came back David was hardly himself. With characteristic frankness she sat down close by him, just where she had been before.

"Shall we go in?" she said.

"Oh, no," said David. "I could sit here forever."

She looked up quickly. He seldom made speeches like that. "I'm perfectly satisfied," she said.

David began to think over something he had heard about a great general, who had suddenly changed his plan in the heat of action, and by so doing had achieved a splendid victory.

"I agree with you in what you said, Violet," he observed.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I think it would be nice to be married, or engaged, or something, too."

"Then why don't you?"

"I don't know whether I can marry the person I want." And then, after a pause: "Can I?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"I mean you."

Her whole manner changed. She rose abruptly, and stood off a little way. He rose, too.

"I thought we were good friends, David, and nothing more. I'm afraid I can't do what you ask."

"Don't be hasty in your refusal, I beg of you," said David, nervously. "I'm not one of those fools who'll be dancing round you after you've said you don't want me. This is once for all, Violet."

"Once for all."

David shook hands with her. "God bless you, Violet," he said. Then he put on his hat, picked up his stick, and walked out on the street. He felt like a drunken man who has suddenly had his head put under a pump. He was decidedly uncomfortable, and yet had an indefinable feeling that good was coming of it all. His character, stern as it was, was not one of those which are hardened by bad luck. His nature sloped toward the right. A shock always affected him for good, as an earthquake always sets the boulders on a mountain side rolling the same way. A cool easterly breeze had sprung up. David had not walked a hundred yards before a new idea struck him.

"By Jove, I hadn't told her of my appointment and new salary!"

He stopped; then walked on.

"I guess on the whole I won't turn round," he said to himself.

Robert Beverly Hale.



A FORTUNATE ASSIGNMENT.

THE clocks of Gotham were striking four on the afternoon of a chilly December day, when Thomas Osgood, reporter, and considered by his chief to be the best man on the force, entered the doorway of the *Blarney* building with a pocketful of Wall Street news to be gotten into shape for the five-o'clock city edition.

The day had been a busy one on the street, owing to a rumored deal in wheat by a western syndicate, and the amiability of even the best-natured of interviewers is liable to be somewhat the worse for wear after a day of dreary waits in brokers' offices, with no certain prospects for dinner. Osgood's was decidedly. So the newsboy found out who tried to sell him a sporting extra at the vestibule entrance, and the same fact inspired the grinning youth in charge of the elevator to push back the door with more than usual alacrity when the cage reached the reporters' room on the fourth floor.

Striding hurriedly to his desk at the further end of the long room, Osgood tossed his heavy storm coat on a chair beside him and proceeded to get his notes together. For a half-hour he steadily scrawled page after page of

copy, and leaned back in his chair with a low whistle of relief as the last sheet disappeared in the copy-box to the city editor's desk, there to be sadly mutilated by the blue pencil of that exacting individual, whom even Osgood's copy could not pass unscathed. Laying down his pencil as the rattle of the ascending box died away, he leisurely lighted a cigar with a match scratched upon his boot heel. It was a very nice cigar, he reflected, and regretfully remembered that it was the last of the four that Col. Ponsonby Arthur had pressed upon him during the morning, when that happy gentleman had rushed from the Stock Exchange into his private office, minus silk hat and one coat sleeve, lost in the pandemonium on the floor; and imparted the joyful intelligence to his two clerks and three reporters that he was a made man as a consequence of wheat having gone up several points.

Osgood had not shared to any great extent in the colonel's rapture at this announcement, but he had taken the cigars, and now fingered the last one lovingly as he touched its end with the lighted match.

Tall, and with a slight, athletic build, he would have been styled too

thin by many persons, but as Plunger, the sporting editor, put it, he always carried "fighting weight," and could step into the ring to-morrow without an ounce of fat on his body. A pair of clear, grayish eyes, a cleanly shaven face and brown hair a trifle inclined to curl at the ends were the chief characteristics of his appearance on this particular afternoon. A woman would have called him attractive-looking, and even a man would have given him credit for a thoroughly wholesome appearance as he sat in the gathering dusk outlined against the window at his side.

And the story of Osgood's experience when he was a young reporter learning the ropes still created a laugh when it was told how "Topsy Sue," a well-known character in uptown police circles, had lurched over to the reporters' table at the Sixth District Station House one morning, and with maudlin tears and embraces implored the "pretty young gent" to save her from the Island, to the great delight of his fellow-journalists and the tittering policemen.

At twenty-six he could be fairly called a successful man in his chosen profession. Leaving Harvard five years before, along with the two or three hundred other fellows in "good old '82," he had secured a reporter's position on the *Blarney*, and had served his paper faithfully ever since, until now he was recognizedly the head of the city staff and would go to London in the spring to succeed Daniels, who was retiring on account of ill health. His mother and father dying while he was quite young, his entire education had been under the supervision of an elderly uncle, a rich Boston merchant, which same worthy gentleman, on learning that his nephew intended to pursue newspaper work instead of following in his own footsteps, first remonstrated, then persuaded, and finally grew enraged, dismissing him with the wrathful injunction to go to the devil with his infernal scribbling, and Osgood had not heard from nor seen him since.

Regret on account of his uncle's displeasure, however, did not ruffle his brow on this occasion as he carelessly glanced over an afternoon paper that he had drawn from his pocket. He was reading merely to kill time and ran over the columns aimlessly, skimming through top-heavy editorials and a criticism of the latest operatic success with equal impartiality, and pausing now and then to look up at the big clock overhead, which when the hands pointed to five would liberate the day force and bring on the untiring night newsgatherers to scour the blustery streets of the big city until daybreak, that its inhabitants might be entertained the next morning with the latest happenings while waiting for their breakfast coffee to cool.

Turning the sheet to get at the foreign column, a paragraph among the personal mention attracted his attention. Osgood wasn't in the habit of reading the personal notices. He said they always reminded him of a copy of the Hohokus *Trumpet* he had seen at college, in which the entire news space of six columns was filled with personal items, except a two-stick article recommending somebody's spavin cure. He carefully reread this paragraph, however. An exclamation of surprise involuntarily escaped him as he laid the sheet down, and leaning far back in his chair contemplatively blew large rings of smoke toward the ceiling.

There was nothing unusual about the lines that had drawn his notice. It was an ordinary society item, informing the readers of the *Thunderbolt* that "Mrs. Beverly Kershaw and niece, Miss Dorothy Drayton, of Cleveland," were in the city, the guests of Mrs. Ruyter, where they would remain for the next few weeks, to the great delectation of Knickerbocker society circles.

To Osgood, however, that three-line paragraph brought back a rush of recollections that he had been studiously schooling himself to forget and had weakly imagined he had done so. Two winters before he had been sent

to Fort Laramie by the *Blarney* to write up the annual Indian outbreak, and the "Limited" being snowed up at Cleveland for three days, he had spent the time there with an old college chum until he should be able to leave for his western assignment. The night after his arrival Denham had loaned him a dress-coat, and insisted upon dragging him off to the Raleigh Club dance, and it was there he had met Dorothy Drayton and her "old cat of an aunt," as Denham had irreverently termed Miss Drayton's watchful protector. There had been several dances, not all danced, and Osgood had seen her a number of times afterward at her home. As Denham's friend she had been very pleasant to him, and when that approving young gentleman advised him to go in and win, for the first time in his life he regretted the step into journalism that had cost him so dear as he reflected that a reporter with only his salary to depend upon had no right to ask any one to share his shifting fortunes, society girls in particular being out of the question.

So nothing had been said, although she had liked him very well. He was sure of that at least. And he had swung himself into the rear Pullman of the "Limited" after their brief acquaintance, with more of a pang than he cared to admit, concealed under the joking remark he made to Denham as the train pulled out, that he hadn't the nerve to ask a girl to marry him one day with the very good prospect of being shot by a Sioux squaw with a sawed-off musket under her blanket before tea-time on the next.

That was all over nearly three years ago, and now this little newspaper notice had brought back the details of that trip with startling vividness. He could not help wondering whether she had entirely forgotten him and whether he would see her while she remained in New York. He resolved that he would get young Peyton at his club to take him around to the Raymond tea next week. She would be sure to be there, and he inwardly

congratulated himself that although he would not come in for his uncle's thousands, the mere fact of his being the nephew of the eccentric old Boston merchant opened many doors to him that otherwise would have remained tightly closed. He had dropped going out, though, since that Laramie trip, and people had stopped sending him cards. He could manage that tea, however, through Peyton. He might catch him at dinner now, and tossing his burned-out Havana into the wastepaper basket and drawing on his coat, he walked down the long room, now filled with night reporters smoking and talking while waiting for their assignments.

He was about entering the elevator when Jackson, of the night force, dropped the city editor's tube, to which he had been summoned a moment before, and called out:

"Hello, Osgood! Stop a bit—the old man wants to speak to you."

"What's up now, Jackson?" he asked as he hurriedly pressed the button leading to the office of Brooks, the city editor, dubbed "the old man" by his associates. For a call after five o'clock for one of the day force usually meant some important assignment to be worked up after hours.

"Is that you, Osgood?" came the response. "I want you to take in that Vanderpool reception at nine. It's going to be a big affair, with some titles from over the water in addition to Ward McAllister's crowd, so you can make a column of it. Blake was to go, but he is on sick-leave to-night, so you are the only available man. Sorry to ask you after hours, but you can get through early if you wish. Your card will see you through all right."

"The deuce take the Vanderpools!" growled Osgood, after an "all right, sir," through the tube. Entering the elevator, he left the building, hailed a cab at the big stone entrance, and reached his rooms at the Arlington in time to get into his dress-coat for dinner and the Vanderpool reception at nine.

THE Vanderpool mansion on the avenue was ablaze with light that streamed down over the massive marble entrance invitingly as carriage after carriage drew up and carefully deposited its freight of sparkling diamonds and spotless shirt fronts upon the carpeted sidewalk. The usual fringe of ragged humanity in ragged shawls and shabby coats lined either side of the canopied entrance, hungrily drinking in the light and laughter and scraps of gayety that floated outside as the paneled vestibule doors swung back to admit the now rapidly arriving guests.

It was the most important event of the season, and the flower of Gotham society, that costly exotic, "The Four Hundred," bloomed in all its sweetest fragrance to do honor to the three representatives of nobility, the guests of young Tracy Vanderpool and his still younger wife, who spared neither trouble nor expense to make their entertainments the feature of every season.

Osgood was a trifle late in arriving, and found the stairway leading from the dressing-room to the parlors blocked with the usual tangle of men in evening dress. Slowly making his way through the crowd, he entered the large drawing-room, where the hostess was receiving, and withdrew into a little curtained window seat, where he had an excellent view of all who entered the room, and yet remained practically invisible to those whom he was observing.

He had never seen the much-talked-of Mrs. Vanderpool, who had created a sensation in society circles two years before by carrying off young Tracy Vanderpool, the best catch of the season, before the astonished eyes of many aspiring mammas who saw their pet dreams fade away into thin air before the alluring charms of the western beauty. Many capable authorities declared her to be the prettiest woman in New York, and even the most unsparing critics of her own sex could not deny her unaffected manners and unfa-

ing good humor, dispute as they might concerning her facial charms. Among the men her popularity was assured, and she was continually surrounded by a swarm of youth who flocked to her teas and at homes, attracted by that indefinable charm that young and pretty matrons of twenty-five seem to possess. She looked unusually well to-night and bore the arduous duty of receiving the unceasing stream of people so gracefully that Osgood mentally remarked that if Mrs. Vanderpool was not satisfied with the *Blarney's* account of her crush it would not be his fault.

In half an hour he had collected enough material for his column in the morning paper and was turning to leave, when a low ripple of laughter and a voice that was strangely familiar from the other side of the heavy alcove curtain made him draw back with a sudden start of recognition. In an instant he was back three years upon his Laramie trip as the *portières* parted and Dorothy Drayton's smiling face appeared in the opening, her faultless profile and dark masses of chestnut hair clearly outlined against the rich yellow material. There was a moment of surprised hesitation, and then she took a step forward with a pleased light of recognition in her eyes that Osgood, whose heart was thumping violently somewhere in the region of his throat, could not fail to see.

"Why, I really believe it is Mr. Thomas Osgood," she said, extending one gloved hand in his direction, which he grasped tightly and absent-mindedly held until she drew it away from him with a little blush that the dimly lighted recess effectually concealed. "You cannot imagine how glad I am to see some one I know among all these strangers. You see," she said smilingly, "I never forget an old friend, even though I haven't seen him for ever so long."

"It is impossible to think it more fortunate than I do, Miss Drayton," said Osgood stumblingly. "I heard you were in town and intended to hunt up your address and call." And he

mentally swore at himself for the lameness of his greeting.

"We—that is, Mrs. Kershaw and myself—are staying at Mrs. Lacey's," she replied, sinking into one of the cushioned window seats. "And now you will come and see us, won't you?"

Among the most lukewarm of Dorothy Drayton's friends she was regarded as a very pretty girl, but to Thomas Osgood, with the embers of a fancied forgotten love beginning to glow again, she was the most radiantly beautiful creature he had ever seen. Gowned in white, from the single rose caught in her hair to the dainty little shoe that swung to and fro from beneath the clinging skirt, she made a picture as she sat there gazing out into the blackness that one would have looked at twice. Osgood would have feasted his eyes upon it for an innumerable number of times, but she felt he was looking at her and went on without turning her head:

"It is very odd, but when Mrs. Vanderpool read me the list of guests I didn't recognize your name at all."

"Well, to tell the truth," he answered, "I wasn't invited. But the *Blarney* was, so it's all right. I'm part of the concern, you know."

"And will you write about the reception for to-morrow's paper, and tell about the gowns and what we had to eat?"

"That's what they sent me here for," he said, seating himself at her feet on a flimsy little stool of painted wood. "You see, if I should omit that all the society women would pronounce anathema upon the poor old *Blarney*, and those who are married would induce their husbands to stop their subscriptions, and then where would our occupations be?"

"Well, I think it is rather stupid reading," she said, tapping her fan against the heavy plate glass. "I know I shan't care for it half so much as I did the story of that Laramie outbreak. Mr. Denham had your paper sent to me every morning, and I used to shudder when I read your dis-

patches, all full of murder and scalping, and wonder how you would ever get back alive."

"Did you really?" exclaimed Osgood. "If I had only known that, I would have yielded up my precious scalp-lock without the slightest regret."

"That is very nicely said, Mr. Osgood. But even that won't explain why you left Cleveland without calling on me to say good-by, and when Mr. Denham told me you had said to him before the train started that you thought it probable that you would be shot by a squaw with a sawed-off gun under her blanket before tea-time." And Miss Drayton's brown eyes were reproachful.

Then it flashed over Osgood just what he had said to Denham before the train pulled out of the station. And he must have told her. Surely she could not have said this to amuse herself by awakening a hopeless love that she must have known he had felt for her. The old longing swept over him just as it had when he had met her three years before. Only this time he knew he would not be asking her to share the fortunes of a struggler for existence. Then he spoke.

"I did not say good-by because I did not dare to," he said. "I think I have loved you from the first. Only I tried to crush back my feelings, because—well, because I felt it was so hopeless."

She was still tapping her fan against the window, and it seemed as if she did not hear him. He noticed it, and despair came into his voice.

"Dorothy," he said softly, turning toward her and imprisoning the tiny gloved hands that he felt trembling in his own, "surely you cannot have been so cruel as to have awakened my love for you to mock me."

He raised his eyes to hers and saw the big brown ones were wet with tears.

"Tom, dear," she whispered as his arm stole round her and her head drooped upon his shoulder, "I have waited for you three such long years."

Robert Emmett MacAlarney.

A GRAPHIOLOGICAL PUZZLE.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

WITH all the usual noise of bell, whistle and escaping steam, the Denver through express train pulled out of the Union Depot at Kansas City one April morning. In one of the chairs in the parlor car sat a gentleman whose keen eyes took in every detail of interest both in and out of the car in which he was riding. He had arranged his belongings and settled himself in his place with the air of an experienced traveler, and as if his destination were some distance ahead. Charles Hastings was a pleasant fellow to look upon—tall, broad-shouldered, with frank blue eyes and an intellectual brow, a man whom every woman would instinctively trust and every child would love, which, by the way, is as high a compliment as could be paid a man.

As the train rolled on over the fertile prairies and through the booming towns of Kansas, his business eye noted every detail of prosperity or adversity. He had been over the road several times before, and so saw every improvement that had been made, and judged much in regard to the character of the people whose homes he was passing. When he wearied of this he studied his fellow-travelers—applying to each one his favorite theories of phrenology and psychology. Again he leaned back in his chair, closed his eyes, and in thought was back in New York City. Before his mental presence appeared three young ladies—Vera Vansant, tall, dignified, graceful; Madge Bryant, artistic, musical; Jessie Willow, gay, practical, fascinating. These were the three in whose society he had spent much of his time during the past winter. Now he was going west on a business trip which he expected would occupy the whole of the spring and summer, and it afforded him no little satisfaction to think that all

three of these young ladies had consented to correspond with him during his absence. So it was that he viewed his fellow-travelers and the country through which he passed with uncommon interest, and his kodak caught some of the amusing or beautiful scenes for the benefit of his fair correspondents.

At his first leisure hour after he reached Denver he wrote and dispatched three letters.

In an incredibly short time, considering that his correspondents were engaged in the whirl of society, he received his answers. So far as the style and contents of these letters were concerned, Hastings had no cause for complaint, yet he seemed far from satisfied as he spread them on the table before him.

"Strange," he murmured, "that three persons so utterly unlike should write so perfectly alike. Where is my science of graphology now? Let me see. This handwriting indicates self-control, dignity, reserve—not one of which adjectives can properly be applied to Miss Jessie Willow as I know her. These heavy cross-strokes indicate strength of will and resolution, neither of which terms applies to Madge Bryant. Firm, clear strokes, open capitals, no unnecessary dashes, no long final flourishes, summary, firm, courageous, generous, but not extravagant—that is not Vera Vansant, who screams at sight of a mouse and is notoriously spendthrift. Is science a fraud, or have these three girls conspired to dupe me? I had hoped by a correspondence during my absence to become so well acquainted with the characters of these girls as to be able to decide to whom to give the preference. Now at the very outset mystery confronts me. It will be strange indeed if I cannot solve it." He read the letters over again.

The matter in each was totally different, but the style was so much the same that the three read as one letter. He read them over, frowned and finally laughed. "If they are written by those whose names are signed, I can soon discover it. If written by one individual, she will have to be remarkably bright if I do not mix her up inside of half a dozen letters."

As time passed on he grew more and more fascinated by his correspondence. He tried to persuade himself that the remarkable similarity in penmanship was due to the fact that all three were graduates of the same institution, which fact might also, in part, account for the resemblance in thought and expression. Yet it was not a satisfactory conclusion, and just as he would get himself to the point of believing it, he would be puzzled by some expression utterly foreign to his idea of the lady whose name was signed to that particular letter.

Gradually the images of the three girls faded from his mind. Madge, Vera and Jessie were blended into one, and that one was his ideal woman.

It made no difference whose monogram was on the seal or whose name was signed to the letter—he read every word with intense interest and longed for more. Such letters as he wrote in reply! Sheets filled with vivid descriptions of persons and places; discussions of literature, art, music, metaphysics, religion—no doubt his correspondents were surprised at the number and length of his letters.

It must be confessed that he never stopped to consider what they might think of his eagerness, or what construction might be placed on his very frequent and very friendly letters. When he wrote he spoke from his soul to a kindred soul—that was all he knew or cared.

Business grew irksome, in spite of the fact that his mining investments were proving successful and his fortune was materially increasing. He began to long intensely for the time to come when he might return to New York. There was a magnetism drawing him

that he could scarce resist—he acknowledged that much even to himself; but when he came to analyze it he was at once plunged into darkness. For whose sake would he cross more than half the continent? Whom did he care to see when once he reached New York? He carefully considered each of the girls as he had known her, and each in turn was set aside. In despair he turned to their letters, and at once all three were forgotten.

Spring, summer and autumn passed by. Then the press of mining business was over till spring, and with a light heart Hastings arranged his business affairs and started for the East. He experienced a strange feeling of impatience to get home again, yet even after he reached there he was restless and dissatisfied. Society extended him a flattering welcome and his three correspondents smiled graciously upon him. He had frequent opportunities for studying them, and made good use of every chance.

Jessie Willow's conversation was shallow and inclined to be slangy. Madge could talk absolutely nothing but music and seemed to have utterly forgotten the literary and metaphysical ideas contained in her letters. Vera was languid and lovely and lacked the vivacity her epistles had always contained. She also expressed opinions at variance with those she had written on the same subjects.

As the days passed, his wonder and impatience grew. Jessie, Vera and Madge had certainly received the letters he had written, for they made frequent reference to them and exhibited the kodak views that he had sent. He was thoroughly convinced that not one of the three was the writer of the letters he had received, but it was out of the question for him to ask any one of them concerning the matter. He could only wait for time to reveal his mysterious correspondent.

One day he received a dainty envelope addressed in the familiar hand. With quickened pulses he opened it, and found it contained only an invitation to dinner at the house of a friend,

Mrs. Gaylord Brown. The next day came an invitation to a musicale at another house, written by the same hand. Hastings noted that these ladies belonged to the especial circle in which Vera, Madge and Jessie moved, and saw that the same person was employed as amanuensis by all of them. But how to find her out—that was the question.

He met Dick Willow on the street one day, and at his urgent request accompanied him home to dine. There were several other guests present, so that they made quite a party when they went in to dinner.

They had just taken their places when a side door opened and a young lady came quietly in and took the seat opposite to Hastings. "Miss St. Clair, Mr. Hastings," was the brief introduction Mrs. Willow gave them before they took their seats, but Hastings caught the quick flash in the brown eyes, and noticed the flush that crept over cheek and brow at the sound of his name. "Here at last is the author of my letters," was his instant conclusion.

Though he appeared to devote himself to the lady by whom he sat, he was keenly watchful of the girl opposite, and admired her well-bred self-possession.

She had a refined face, a cultured air, and fitted perfectly the ideal which Hastings had drawn of the woman whose letters had attracted him across half the continent.

"Who is this Miss St. Clair to whom I was introduced at dinner?" he inquired of Dick as they smoked their after-dinner cigars together.

"She is Jessie's amanuensis," replied Dick. "You see, it was this way. Miss St. Clair was a seamstress whom Madam Fairchild sent to our house to receive some orders. She wrote them down so beautifully that mother was astonished and inquired into her history. It seems that she has been finely educated and was once wealthy, but her father died insolvent, and she was left alone to make her living as best she could. So she took to doing

dressmaking until something better should offer. Jess interested herself in the lady's behalf, and quite a number of the society ladies employed her as amanuensis. She goes regularly from house to house, gives perfect satisfaction and receives good wages. She writes letters, invitations, essays and poems, and is the real secretary of all their societies. They say her talent for letter-writing is marvelous, and every letter of which they are at all particular is given into her hands to answer. Her style is faultless, and she never betrays one person's affairs to another. That is all I know about her."

"Do you suppose I could get her to do some copying for me?" Hastings inquired.

"I'm sure I don't know. She is in the library writing up a lot of invitations for Jess, and if you like you can speak with her while I go to order the carriage for mother." And Dick led the way to the library.

Miss St. Clair sat at a desk in one of the window alcoves, and merely looking up as the gentlemen entered, went on with her writing.

"Miss St. Clair," said Dick, going forward, "my friend, Mr. Hastings, has learned that you do amanuensis work, and desires to speak with you in regard to doing some for him. Now, Hastings, if you'll excuse me I will be back shortly."

Miss St. Clair was playing nervously with her pen. She did not know that Hastings was aware that she had written the letters he had received for nine months past, but she knew the discovery would be made as soon as he saw her handwriting. It was only an instant; then she regained her self-possession, and looking up said:

"You wish to have some writing done, sir?"

"No," replied Hastings, drawing a chair near the desk. "I only wish to speak of some that has been done."

She gave a quick, startled glance into his eyes, and a warm flush surged up over her face.

"I am not at liberty to discuss work

that has been done for my patrons," she replied, vainly trying to make her tones quiet and cool.

"But I am at liberty to discuss letters that have been written to myself, am I not?" he questioned.

She glanced up with an embarrassed smile and answered:

"You will have to be your own judge."

"Do not treat me as a stranger, Miss St. Clair," he pleaded. "Surely after all the letters that have passed between us we may claim acquaintance."

"You forget that the letters were written for others," she said quietly.

"Yes," he replied with a passionate ring in his voice, "I forgot that long ago." Then he added more quietly: "It has been the most delightful correspondence of my life. You cannot imagine what your letters have been to a poor lonely fellow away out on the mountains and in mining camps. They were refreshing draughts to my thirsty soul. No, I understand what you would say"—as she raised her hand with a gesture of dissent. "They may have been written for others and signed with the names of others, but it was your mind and soul that went into them. I did not understand, at first, they were so different from what I expected to receive. But I quit trying to understand and gave myself up to utter enjoyment. It made no difference whose name was signed to a letter, the three became as one to me. Can you not understand how it was?"

He was leaning eagerly toward her, and she felt the passion in his voice and manner, so she did not trust herself to look up as she replied:

"I think I understand. I am glad that the letters served the purpose for which their owners sent them, and that they whiled away some of your loneliness. Will you not please excuse me from discussing them any further?"

She looked up in a vain attempt to appear self-possessed, but her eyes betrayed her.

He leaned nearer to her and said pleadingly:

"Do not turn me away so after I have come all the way to New York to see you. Will you not admit that you cared a little for my letters too? Answer me one thing: Did you think of others when you were writing, or did you forget them?"

She flushed painfully and could not reply.

"Ah!" he cried exultantly, "you need not answer, for I am satisfied. Do you care enough to allow me to continue the acquaintance thus begun? May we not be friends for ourselves and leave others out of the question?"

"Yes," she answered, "if you will agree not to refer to business letters."

"I have had no business letters from you," was the unexpected answer. Then hearing Dick's voice in the hall, he rose from his chair and added in a business-like tone: "If you will give me your address I will call this evening."

Then he went away with Dick, but the little card bearing her name made a warm spot over his heart all that afternoon.

As for Marie St. Clair, her thoughts were in such a tumult that she could hardly write that afternoon. From her satchel of writing-materials she took a manifold copying-book and looked over its pages. There were fac-simile copies of all the letters Hastings had written to his three correspondents, and following each one was a copy of her answer. No wonder he had been unable to "mix her up."

"Ah," she whispered, "he does not know what his letters have been to me, nor how lonely I have been since they ceased coming. But now he has come, and that is better than letters written to other people; for he loves me."

Now Charles Hastings, as he tells his lovely wife, carries on his correspondence "by word of mouth."

Marie Nantz.

A NOVEMBER IDYL.

CYNTHIA BENNETT stood at the gate and looked wistfully down the steep yellow road. She was a lonely little figure in the landscape. She wondered if she were not the only person left on Old Foggy Mountain that brilliant September morning, for surely everybody else had gone by and she felt just a little bitterness in her kindly soul in consequence. For the gods were smiling on the county fair that morning, else such regal splendor of sky, such silvery drifts of haze, such floods of yellow sunshine had never been lavished upon the hills.

The deep silence was emphasized to poor Cynthia by the knowledge that all the rest of the world was merry-making, and even the passers-by, whom she had been watching for two hours, had ceased to afford her their momentary company. They had been coming since four o'clock that morning, for it was sixteen miles to Martinsburg, and the county fair came but once a year, so that they who would not lose one of its delights must be on the way betimes. They had come from the farther side of Old Foggy, from Moriah, whose gorgeous banks lay just beyond, from Bethesda Settlement, and the valley of Rocky Fork. The Taylors had passed in a procession of eight wagons, the Jeff Taylor branch from Dogwood Creek and the Jim Taylors from the South Fork. Then there had been the Middletons from Zion, and the Grimms in the great blue boat wagon, and all in stiff shoes and holiday attire, with beaming faces and bulging dinner-baskets.

Cynthia looked up and down the empty road and drearily drew her pink sun-bonnet over her eyes, stooping to pick a four-leafed clover.

"That's for good luck, anyway," she said to herself, looking for another. She was startled by a hearty voice.

"How de do? how air you? how's yore health?" it said. "I 'lowed it was the Widdier Bennitt soon's I turned the bend," and a brown hand reached for hers.

"Why, Lijah Shobe, if I wasn't thinkin' 'bout you this blessed minute of time!" cried the widow. "Whar did ye come from?"

"I come from Rattlesnake Falls this mornin'. I'm livin' thar with my dorter, Nance Angeline, she that married Bednego Pratt. They've bought a place down nigh the Falls, mostly corn bottoms, an' they're doin' right well on it. I reckon ye know thet I've buried my wife, she thet was Sairy Taylor?"

"Yes, so I heerd. I was thinkin' 'bout that fust fair ye took me to, don't ye mind, an' we asked Sairy to ride home with us? Well, I'm right sorry fur ye. Won't ye 'light an' hev a cheer, Mr. Shobe?"

"No, thank'ee, widdier," answered he. "I hev to go to Zion to fetch a new corn cutter. Bednego broke his'n all to smash las' night."

"Well, yore critter acts dry, sniffin' toward the troft; give him a drink, anyway; it's middlin' warm this mornin'. Mebbe you'll have a gourd o' buttermilk yourself; it's more wettiner than what water is."

"I don't keer if I do, widdier. I've come a right smart piece an' I won't hev no other chance 'fore I git to Zion. What air ye doin' to home to-day? Never mind, I kin open the gate. Our folks is all gone to the fair."

"So's our'n, all but me, but John, that's my son, ye know, an' Elmira 'lowed the trip was too much fur me. I ain't so young as I used to be, an' they wasn't no room, no way."

"Sho, now, widdier, jest shet up 'bout agein'!" exclaimed Mr. Shobe. "Why, you look younger now than you did the last time I seen ye, at

Billy Pollock's buryin' 'fore I moved up to Wood County, nigh seven year ago! Agein'—sho! Ef the gals nowadays looked as young—why, widder, you're as plump as a patridge, an' your cheeks looks like pineys this minute——"

"Oh, go 'long now, Mr. Shobe; ye're jest foolin' now, an' ye know it's a-praisin' up an' a-complimentin' of a' old woman that's a grandmother. Won't ye 'light an' come in tell I run down sullar fur the buttermilk?"

Mr. Shobe hesitated for a moment, as his horse stood with dripping mouth over the trough, and then dismounted and followed his hostess to the house, leaving the horse to refresh himself upon the thick rich grass around the well. There was a straight-backed wooden chair on the porch, into which the visitor dropped with a long sigh.

"Yas, I've hed a powerful sight o' hard luck, widder, sence I seen ye last," he remarked, with the glass of creamy buttermilk in his hand.

"Dear suz, I reckon ye hev!" she replied. "I know ye've buried yer wife, an' that sort o' breaks a body up. I've been through it myself."

The widow had a soft voice and sympathetic lines about her puckered mouth. Her guest shook his head mournfully.

"Yas, yas, I've been through the flint mill. Sairy died a year ago las' harvest—wust time she could 'a' took. Ye mind what a wonderful stirrin' woman she was, an' sot in her ways—all them Jeff Taylors is sot—an' she wouldn't hev no hired help. Both the gals was married an' gone long ago. Mary Seraphine, she married Peter Grimm, old Josey Grimm's son down nigh Captine—just a leetle more, 'bleeged to ye; mighty fine buttermilk; ye must hev good stock—an' Nance Angeline, she thet I'm livin' with now, married Bednego Pratt, son of ole Preacher Pratt thet used to preach in the log meetin' house when me an' you went to singin' school thar. That was a long time ago, widder, an' we hed mighty good times thar. Yas, I've hed hard luck sence. It was

blazin' hot weather an' I hed a powerful crap. Wood County is more of a wheat country than what this is, an' I hed a lot of hands an' Sairy was a-cookin' an' doin' fur 'em herself, like I tole ye, an' she got overhet an' just tuck an' died in her cheer at dinner-time."

"That was mighty hard on ye, I do reckon it was," cooed the widow, pityingly.

"Yas, it was thet," admitted Mr. Shobe, "fur I hed to take the hands out of the field to help in the house tell we could get the gals thar, an' then it rained on my wheat the day of the buryin', an' the heft of it musted in the shock. Like to sp'iled my whole crap."

"Well, I reckon!" mourned the widow. "They do say troubles don't never come by theirselves."

"No more they don't, nuther." And Mr. Shobe tilted back his chair and looked sadly up into the luxuriant hop vine that curtained the porch.

"Well, I reckon you hev it right easy now, livin' with your dorter," said the widow, comfortingly.

Mr. Shobe settled himself astride his chair before he answered.

"M—m, well, yas, it does 'pear like I ought to be well fixed thar, but—I reckon thet a body thet's done fur theirselves is ruther hard to suit. Now Nance, she's a wonderful stirrin' woman, Nance is, a reg'lar Jeff Taylor all over. I tole Bednego 'fore the weddin', says I, 'Bednego, I don't 'low to tell no tales out o' school, but,' says I, 'you'll find thet gal o' mine hez the most uncommon lot o' git-up to her thet ever you see.' I reckon he hez thought sence thet I knowed what I was a-sayin'. Yas, I jest up an' tole him."

"They ain't no place like a body's own," said the widow, and her motherly voice contrasted pleasantly with the memory of the strident tones of the energetic Mrs. Pratt.

"Thet's so, thet's uncommonly so, Cynthia."

And the visitor hitched his chair nearer to his hostess, tilted it back, put

his feet upon the lower rung, hung his soft black hat upon one elevated knee and grasped the side rungs as firmly as if he expected an earthquake shock.

A meditative turkey-cock came cautiously around the side of the house, and, after one or two inquiring clucks, unfurled his plumage and strutted pompously before the guest. A long-legged Shanghai rooster hopped upon the low porch and eyed him inquisitively, with one foot in the air.

The widow slyly peeped at the reflection of her round little face in one of the shining tin pans inverted on a bench, and pushed back a lock of hair by its aid. Mr. Shobe had fallen into deep meditation. The sun crept around the house and shone through the thick vine upon the clean floor. The marigolds and poppies exhaled a rank odor in the heat, while the clump of prince's feather hung its pink plumes. A field of corn across the way stood in russet ripeness against the magnificent background of the wooded hill-side. The only sounds were the clear "chip, chip," of a red-bird and the sleepy hum of bees about a tall purple aster at the front gate. The drowsy air was full of sweet autumn scents, as if nature were indulging every sense in a gracious revel before the season of tempest and gloom.

The stroke of the clock in the house roused Mr. Shobe from his reverie.

"Wall, wall, I declare! There ain't no tellin' what Nance Angeline would say ef she saw me settin' here! 'Pears like a body ain't their own boss ef they live with their folks. I'm thinkin' 'bout goin' to myself, 'fore long, ef I jest knew of a—a—well, ye see, a lone man don't make much show keepin' house—an' Sairy's been dead goin' on fifteen months. It's a lonesome way to live."

"It is that, but the ways of Providence is 'past understandin'. We must take our 'flections as they come," said the widow, meekly.

"Well, your'n ain't so bad. I reckon you're right snug fixed here with yore son. I heerd he got a right smart piece of land with his wife."

Cynthia's lips quivered. She remembered the fascinations of the fair, the big pumpkins and turnips, the ice cream taffy, the glorious quilts and rag carpets, the shell frames and alum baskets, the races which the good deacon's horses would run, the side-show where the bearded lady, the sword swallower, the two-headed calf and the glass-blower were all exhibited for ten cents, children half price. But more than all these she liked to see the people, the wonderful crowds of people: one would not think there were so many in the whole world unless one went to the fair. One year there were two thousand. And she could not go because her son's wife had ambitions and wanted to take certain of her wares that would occupy space in the spring wagon.

Something swelled in her throat, but she replied, loyally:

"I hadn't orter complain. Elmiry's a good worker an' a savin' cook, an' ef she hez her ways so hev I. I hain't no call to grumble."

Mr. Shobe's sensibilities were unusually keen this morning, and he understood the unspoken side of this reply.

"Wall, now, Cynthy, you deserve a good home. You was a mighty likely gal, an' thar was them thet would hev done better by ye than them thet did get ye, not meanin' harm to them thet's dead an' gone." Which enigmatical speech made Cynthia blush rosily.

Mr. Shobe rose and twirled his hat.

"Mebbe I'll be 'long this road agin this week, an' ef I am, I'll fetch ye a watermillion. I see ye hev sech a scrawny leetle patch. Ef thar's anythin' I kin raise it air a watermillion."

"We'll be 'bleeged to ye, Lijah; we've hed terrible luck with our'n this summer."

The caller drew a step nearer to the widow. She carried him back to his youth and he forgot the long years between. He took one more step to her side, and then a funny little sound smote the silence, which made the turkey-cock gobble vociferously, while the redbird responded with a sharp "chip, chip."

The widow turned peony red and slid away from the strong arm that was entangled in her apron strings. "Why, Lijah Shobe, where's yore manners gone to?" she cried.

Mrs. Pratt did not return from the fair in the best of spirits. She took only second premium on her plum "butter," and none at all on her "Ris-in' Sun" quilt and her homespun yarn, while she had to see Mrs. Bennett carry off the red ticket on her apple-butter, and what she was pleased to term her "cow-butter," in contra-distinction to her jam and marmalade.

Then she was tired and the children were fretful. Jakey had got sick on too many peanuts and Viry had spilled red lemonade over the purple silk that had just been made over from her mother's carefully saved wedding-dress. Altogether she did not think the fair was all that it should be, considering the rarity of its occurrence.

Her father sagaciously watched her barometer for several days. At length one morning he caught a propitious moment.

"Lemme git ye thet bucket o' water, dorter. Ye hev too much to do. I think 'bout yer maw ever' time I see ye skirmishin' round, an' I mind thet she died on it too. Ye hev too big a fambly. I'm a nawful bother to ye, I know. I'll hev to come on ye when I git old, an' I don't want ye to git plum wore out now. I've been thinkin' 'bout it a heap here lately. I've sort o' been thinkin' thet I orter take my team an' the red cows an' crap it fur myself. I'm so uncommonly onhandy round here. Yas, I've been layin' off to take myself off yore hands. I think young folks hadn't orter be bothered with old folks round when they're as spry as I be."

Mrs. Pratt took her hands from the dish-water and turned so as to face her father, and gave him a searching look. He gazed in all directions but at her, and fumbled uneasily with a harness strap he had brought in to mend. Mrs. Pratt spoke finally with great emphasis:

"I'll bet that Bednego Pratt never

tuck that bar'l o' cider down sullar when I tole him too, an' it's done turned hard. How much did ye drink, pap?"

"Oh, jest a leetle—half a gourdful, mebbe. It ain't turned much yit," replied the old gentleman promptly, not catching the depth of her meaning.

"Um—m, well, it can't be cherry bitters, fur the whisky is all gone off 'em an' I caught Bednego a-suckin' the cherries yisterday, so it ain't that. Ye must be crazy, pap."

"She didn't hev much agin' it," chuckled the old man as he rambled out to the woodpile, while Mrs. Pratt, the energetic, returned to her dish-pan. That evening she said to her husband as they sat in the kitchen before their early bedtime:

"What you s'pose ails gran'pap here lately? He's been actin' wonderful cur'ous."

"He air thet," assented Mr. Pratt; "fed the critters sixteen ears of corn apiece, an' give the bran mess to the wrong cow jis' to-day; an' yisterday I sot him to watch the million patch—somebody's been hookin' em like sixty—an' don't ye think they was four big ones stole right while he was thar!"

"I reckon he's gittin' childish," remarked the lady. "Don't 'pear like he's ole 'nough, nuther, but I reckon trouble hez sot heavy on him an' sort o' gone to his mind."

And thus the subject dropped.

John Bennett and his wife, on the other hand, returned from the fair in high spirits. They had passed the Pratts on the road and displayed their premium tickets gayly. Cynthia had a nice supper awaiting them in the clean kitchen.

"Hello, granny," called her son, heartily, coming in with the two younger children in his arms. "Come and see what Elmiry's fetched ye, to say nothin' of premiums. She's fetched you a new dress."

"Law, ye had no call to do that," said the widow as she watched her daughter-in-law unroll the package.

"What do you think of that?" inquired Mrs. John with some pride.

"Purple-sprigged!" exclaimed the widow, ruefully. "Don't ye think it's a leetle—jest a leetle—old fur me?"

"Old! Why, what air you, a bride? That is just the color that old ladies have worn ever since I can remember," retorted the young woman with some asperity. "Perhaps I ought to have bought you a yellow calico or a red one instead of this."

"Dear suz, no; this is jest the thing fur me, now that I see it good. I'm shore I'm 'bleeged to yer. I reckon I do fergit how old I am. But I wasn't sixteen when I married my fust man—an' thet don't seem long ago."

"Your first man, mother——"

"Law, do hear me talk! I must be losin' my wits! But what did you see at the fair?"

"Near about everything, I guess. Did you have company to-day? I see two chairs out on the porch."

"I was windin' yarn on them. I thought it was high time to be settin' up the knittin's. No, they weren't nobody here—but jest a man stopped to water his beast, an oldish like man goin' to Zion."

A few days after this Mrs. John Bennett was hanging out her washing in the grassy front yard, when an equestrian drew up at the gate and spoke to her.

"How de do, Miss' Bennitt? how air ye? how's yer health?"

"Why, Mr. Shobe!" she exclaimed, "I haven't heard of you in a long time. Wont you 'light and come in?"

The visitor readily assented, and dismounted, carefully bringing in an unwieldy bag, which he presented to Mrs. Bennett. "I was passin' t'other day an' I see what a scrawny little million patch ye hed, an' I thought as I was comin' this way to-day I'd fetch ye a taste of a million as is a million." Mr. Shobe sat down on the porch and smiled benignly upon the small Bennetts who came to see the melons, which their mother displayed with effusive gratitude. "All them leetle fellows your'n, Miss' Bennitt? Fine fambly. Live here all alone, do ye?"

"My man's mother lives with us an' a hand in the summer; the rest of the time John gets along himself."

"Le's see, I must 'a' knowed John's mother. Weren't she a Reed—Cynthy Reed? I reckon she'd mind me."

"Likely she would. She's not at home to-day; she's gone up to Hannah Ross' to help with the apple-butter."

Mr. Shobe nodded indifferently, and addressed himself to the entertainment of the children, making hollyhock dolls for the little girls and elder whistles for the boys. At length Cynthia returned, and seemed to remember him without difficulty. She sat on the steps while he told her about his daughter's great luck with geese. Then he wondered why John did not come, and, concluding he could not sit any longer, went away without leaving a message.

"I wonder what he wanted," remarked Mrs. John, later in the day. "I just believe the old fool is setting out."

"I shouldn't wonder," answered her mother-in-law, abstractedly. Then, with her back toward Elmira, she added: "I reckon he's lonesome, bein' he's a man, an' men kin do as they like, an' there ain't none to hinder him as I know of."

The young woman looked up quickly. "I s'pose he's a good deal of bother to Nance, and then men don't have the same duty to their children and grand-children that women do. What with minding the young ones and keeping up the knitting and carpet rags, and the milk and chickens to look after, I don't see as a woman with nice grand-children and a good home has any call to get married."

"No more she hasn't. That's jest what I think. A nice old maid, now, would be just the one fur him," responded the widow, promptly.

One November morning, when the cardinal and flame color of the hills had sobered into umber and russet and the purple mist of the Indian summer clung about their solemn heads, there was a commotion in the

little community of Old Foggy that contrasted sharply with the magnificent peace of the day. Search-parties were beating about the forests with echoing shouts, while little groups of people gathered at the fork of the roads and talked in mysterious tones.

"The folks went to Zion with a load of corn, and when they come back she was gone—she weren't nowhere."

"They're draggin' the well now," said another.

A stranger riding down the road stopped and asked what was the matter.

"Ole lady lost—clean gone—can't be found," was the reply.

"An old lady? What did she look like? How old was she?"

"Plump little woman, with red cheeks an' brown hair. She wasn't very ole," was the response.

"Did she wear a speckled dress and a red shawl?" asked the stranger.

"I don't know if she wore 'em or not, but them was her best duds," replied a neighbor.

"Well, then, I guess she's all right," said the man. "I'm the squire from Buckskin Township, an' I rather think I married that old lady with red cheeks to an oldish man in a butternut suit, drivin' a span of grays to a green wagon full of house plunder, an' with two red cows tied behind. Names was Shobe an' Bennett. I reckon you needn't hunt any more; they're all right; never hitched a loviner couple. Goin' up to Wood County, they said."

"Married!" came in a chorus from the group. "Married! The ole iijits!" "What did they want to leave good homes fur?" "What did they run away from?"

"Mebbe they thought they knew their own minds," suggested the justice.

When Abednego Pratt was informed of the marriage, he shivered and said: "Some of you fellers go an' tell my woman, won't ye?" and added reflectively, "Well, he'll hev himself to winter, anyhow, an' he wouldn't 'a' made a full hand much longer, anyway. 'Tain't such an ill wind, after all."

Lizzie Hyer Neff.

line element directs its attention, and investigation reveals that it is not only men of ordinary mind who find this type of woman attractive.

Lord Byron is accused of saying: "I don't talk, I can't flatter, and won't listen except to a pretty or foolish woman." This remark was made in reference to his impression of Madame de Staël, of whom he declared: "She has every sort of talent and would be universally popular if she would confine herself to her inferior talents, pleasantries, anecdote and literature." A dissection of the principles which influenced the poet-lord's impression will solve a problem in social life which confronts us every day. We find that the chief social fault attributed to Madame de Staël is the habit of "declaiming with too much enthusiasm on political or even philosophical subjects." In a word, the author of "Corinne" failed to pay sufficient deference to Lord Byron's intellect.

There is nothing so distasteful to a man as a display of learning in a woman, and nothing he resents more than to be made to feel that he is being instructed by one. Ordinarily, men seek in the society of women a diversion from the weighty affairs of their every-day business life, and they prefer to be amused rather than enlightened.

We all know who is the most popular woman of our acquaintance. It is not the pronouncedly brainy woman, nor yet her more spiritually developed sister. It is the woman whose light-heartedness is proof against care and whose vivacity is an enemy to *ennui*; who charms us through the medium of a happy personality and does not bore us with the complexities of her inner nature.

Much study is involved in understanding the complications of character which belong to women with great depth of thought and feeling, and the perplexed mind of man turns from them with relief to the apparently shallow woman whose individuality it requires no effort to comprehend.

After all, the truly wise woman is she who possesses the art of concealing her

DO MEN REALLY LIKE SILLY WOMEN?

CERTAINLY appearances would tend toward a decision, in the affirmative. It needs only casual observation to convince us that it is chiefly to women of unobtrusive intellect that the greater part of the mascu-

wisdom; whose cleverness interprets the humors of her companion and who has sufficient tact to adjust her conversation in harmony with the moods of the individual. She it is who flatters the vanity of man by appealing to his intellect, and whose light conversational touch affords a soothing relaxation for his overstrained nerves. Such a woman he is apt to designate in grateful retrospection "a dear little ignoramus," blissfully unaware that while the so-called ignoramus catered to his mental requirements, she added to her knowledge of human nature the whole sum of his weaknesses.

One of the most fascinating women I have ever known was pleased to give the impression of never having entertained a serious thought in her pretty blond head. When I asked her reasons for having willfully maintained an attitude of lamentable ignorance toward a remarkably clever statesman, she replied, with an air of wisdom that would have startled the distinguished politician could he have seen it, "Why, don't you know? I wanted to interest him. I have given him something to think about, and he will decide that I am frivolous. What a pleasant surprise it will be for him when he finds I am not." And, myself considerably enlightened, I agreed with her.

After all, then, to return to the question, Do men really like silly women? Perhaps it were well to vary the wording of the text: say, rather, Do men like really silly women? We are not so sure about that, and so as to end the matter, we will decide that it is only in semblance that they do. But we have seen that there is a degree of silliness which becomes an art, and that when properly applied it can be made a virtue. Why, then, should we be surprised if sometimes man is dazzled by its prototype?

Eva Addra Milhous.

MR. HEUBLEIN'S YOUTHFUL SINS.

(FROM THE GERMAN OF ERNST JAHN.)

FOR the first time in a hitherto cloudless marriage, deep sorrow oppressed the wife of Mr. Josias Heublein.

Through all the years of their married life, Mr. Heublein, an honest tax-receiver, had been, in her adoring estimation, a faultless model of tender, affectionate, contented husbands. But all that was changing now, yes, had changed, in a month, a week, a day. She could not measure the time; so gradually and incredulously had she awakened to the great certainty. Two tear drops actually gathered in the clear depths of the soft blue eyes, and splashed over, making a queer little furrow on the smooth pink flesh of her pretty cheek. She sat before a little French mirror, coiling her brown hair, and thought, as she carefully obliterated the traces of the disfigurement, of the time when Mr. Heublein had likened the coloring of that same cheek, to the tinting of a sea-shell. She doubted if he even looked at it now, much less noticed the coloring. Then she fell to recalling Josias, as he was, before she had ruled his heart and home.

Mr. Heublein had, in fact, been very lank and slender, so much so, that he was often the target for friendly ridicule, but since the regime of this generous, brown-haired, blue-eyed woman, his avoirdupois had almost doubled, his angular form had grown rotund and almost graceful. Mrs. Heublein's incomparable mastery of the culinary art, together with her never-failing cheerfulness, and her devotion to his welfare, had, no doubt, wrought this agreeable change. All the neighbors realized the fact; Mrs. Heublein, indeed was conscious of the truth, and the transformed skeleton, himself, bore witness to it, not only by his prosperous physical symmetry, but by many an appreciative

compliment and stomach-prompted caress.

But now, alas, the little woman was compelled to look on, sadly, at the utter indifference, with which Mr. Heublein treated the choicest dishes that she prepared for his special delectation. Not that he disdained, at all, the toothsome roast goose, the tender venison, and juicy, daintily-seasoned hares, that daily graced with all their aromatic winsomeness his faultlessly arranged dining table. No, indeed: on the contrary, he devoured great quantities of delicacies, without seeming to taste them, without a word of appreciation or praise. The delicate viands were merely bolted in sullen silence. The digestive organs, in vengeance, refused to assimilate, and the splendid physique began to undergo a visible and rapid decline.

Mrs. Heublein's anguish grew unspeakable.

Otherwise, too, there was an alarming change in Mr. Heublein, which made of an agreeable and kindly natured man, a disagreeable and ill-tempered churl. He deluged the sacred domain of the pretty dining-room, with the smoke of infinite cigars. He was listless in manner, and silent to the questioning voice of his anxious wife. If perchance she could win from him an expression, it was antagonistic to her tender solicitude, and delivered in a peevish snarling tone, indicative of his wavering, fickle mood.

Surely there was something, more than any physical disorder, which had wrought this havoc, in the perfect atmosphere of her domestic felicity. In vain did Mrs. Heublein search for an explanation, at first by quiet observation, and later by carefully formed questions. Her investigations, which were perhaps carried on too zealously, one never-to-be-forgotten day, called forth an answer from the distracted man, which

once, should have been impossible. "Those are my affairs," he snarled, "Please attend to your own."

On the day of this unpleasant and grievous occurrence, the house-maid found that neither Mr. Heublein nor his wife were in the dining room when she went, as usual to serve the appetizing and daintily prepared dinner. Quick to scent a domestic infelicity, she cast about her mystery-loving eyes, and discovered beside each plate, a fateful looking missive. Each one had sent the other word that he should like to dine alone.

The first conjugal conflict in the Heublein family had come to light.

Monotony was at an end. The satisfaction of the happy maid was still enhanced, when she noticed the tear-stained eyes of her kind little mistress, yet she was moved by a sense of pity not to deliver the master's message. She minded not the feelings of that churlish man, but the little blue-eyed mistress was quite another consideration. Nevertheless, it was a piece of news, which she must impart to some one, and impart it she did immediately, with many a mysterious air and many a proffered surmise.

Mrs. Heublein heard an exaggerated account of it that afternoon, from her dear friend, Mrs. Rauscher, the Inspector's wife.

Mrs. Rauscher was accustomed to call on all her friends, regularly, in turn, upon successive mornings, after the day's marketing was finished. If she appeared in the afternoon, it was sure to mean a condolence visit, and those who knew the habits of this singular woman, knew with certainty, that the mother, who received her in the afternoon, was in need of sympathy, because her son had failed in his final examination, or the wife of an officer was sadly disappointed, because her husband had not received his long expected promotion, or a young girl was in distress, because her betrothed had suddenly forsaken her. All Mrs. Rauscher's afternoons, were as she expressed it, devoted to those who needed her sympathy and aid.

There may be, in the world, a great number of women like Mrs. Rauscher, who take marvelous delight in the weal and woe of their neighbors. But one characteristic gave Mrs. Rauscher the distinction of standing alone. She always knew all the circumstances, in detail, of the unhappy event, which occasioned her visit, much better than the parties concerned. Indeed she seemed to possess the power of divination coming many times, before the misfortune, like a storm-swallow heralding the disastrous future. It had even once occurred, that she was just describing to a family all the picturesque scenic beauty of a Russian landscape, when a government decree of banishment to that country, arrived for the master of the house. Such a seer-gift is always suggestive of the superhuman, and like all persons so endowed, she was looked upon by her fellow citizens, with respectful awe.

Whoever believes that Mrs. Rauscher was benevolent in words only, does her a flagrant injustice. For whenever a servant was dismissed from an influential family, before the customary time for notification elapsed, Mrs. Rauscher always gave material aid to the dismissed one, by transplanting her, usually into the bosom of her own family. By virtue of her divining powers, she always managed to have her own servant leave just about that time. So it came to pass that her amount of knowledge was, phenomenally increased, and that she could see with a hundred eyes and hear with a hundred ears.

When the first storm gathered in the Heublein household, Mrs. Rauscher's magical prescience in no wise failed her. All of the minute details and ominous portents came to her knowledge, in time for her to interpret them to Mrs. Heublein, before that good lady had time to think of them reasonably, at all.

Although Mrs. Heublein did not like Mrs. Rauscher in any remarkable degree, still the respect due to her unusual experience and wisdom, on worldly matters, and hope, too, of obtaining some enlightenment, as to the

cause of the lamentable change, in her dear Josias made the now almost heart-broken wife, listen patiently to all the surmises and suggestions which Mrs. Rauscher so kindly proffered. Then when Mrs. Heublein had coherently and intelligently answered all the cross questioning, and made a voluntary disclosure of her lacerated heart, Mrs. Rauscher, first inquired, with the most delicate tact, whether there had not been an official investigation of Mr. Heublein's accounts, or whether he was not perhaps expecting one, in the near future.

The blue eyes flashed, and the gentle voice had a note of triumph in it, mingled though it was with both reproach and sorrow.

"My dear Mrs. Rauscher, how can you be so heartless? My husband's accounts were inspected last week, and were found in a state of absolute perfection."

A shade of disappointment flitted across the seer-like countenance of Mrs. Rauscher, but it vanished quickly, and there came in its stead a look of tender sympathy and condolence. She flicked her nose with her left fore-finger, hemmed, and began cautiously in a meditative manner.

"Well—had Mr. Heublein any love affair, before his marriage to you?"

"Yes, with a cabinet's daughter, at his former home, but she had red hair, and bleary eyes," stammered the blushing wife, "After he met me, of course —"

"Ah, does she still live at her old home?"

"Yes, she is yet unmarried. Her photograph is here," turning to the family album. "Not a beauty as you must see."

Mrs. Rauscher inspected it critically, and although she thought the discovery a very serious one, threw over her manner, the mantle of sweet charity, and tried to behave as if it were a matter of no importance, while she carelessly replaced the picture of the really beautiful girl in the album.

She had the key now. Her heart was rioting over the easy diagnosis.

"Does not Mr. Heublein receive an unusual amount of mail from his former home?"

The anxious wife did not know.

"Suppose we investigate his writing desk and paper basket. Dear Mrs. Heublein," here she placed a protecting hand on the little wife's shoulder, "you must be calm and prepared for the worst."

What they found was of a very serious character indeed. So Mrs. Rauscher thought. There were two envelopes in the basket, addressed to Mr. Heublein, posted at Berlin, bearing the innocent looking stamp of a business firm, "B. Henning, International Klischee Business."

Mrs. Heublein did not know what the word "Klischee" meant. Neither did Mrs. Rauscher, but she quietly assumed that it meant something very fatal to Mrs. Heublein's peace of mind. Divorce perhaps. Who knew?

A torn receipt for a newspaper advertisement was also found in the basket, dated, however, several years ago. "What in the world could have induced your husband to advertise in a newspaper," inquired Mrs. Rauscher, "a newspaper too, of a very questionable character?"

"I am sure I cannot imagine," quivered the red lips.

"Find out, then," said Mrs. Rauscher, with a significant look. And departing, she left behind her the comforting assurance of another visit, as soon as her numerous duties would permit.

When Mr. Heublein came home to supper that evening, his wife asked him, in a general way, about the reputation of the offending newspaper. Although the tax-receiver was somewhat surprised to find his non-literary wife, so deeply interested in the literary value of a newspaper, he patiently explained to her, the political views it supported, and the rank of its literary contributors. Then she inquired whether it ever published the official statements of tax-receivers, which still more surprised Mr. Heublein, and to which he answered in the negative.

"Will you then kindly tell me, what sort of an advertisement you put in that paper three years ago?" "By chance, I found the receipt in your wastebasket."

Mr. Heublein turned pale, blushed and flatly denied all knowledge of either envelope or receipt, then, contrary to his usual custom, he arose abruptly and retired to his own room.

On the next morning, true to her promise, Mrs. Rauscher called again, having, meanwhile, discovered that a very large and heavy box, had arrived for Mr. Heublein, three days ago. Mrs. Heublein did not know the least thing about it, the box having been delivered while she was attending an afternoon reception.

A search revealed the great empty box, hidden away in the garret. It had come from Berlin.

Mrs. Heublein was frantic. What could the contents be? What did all the mystery mean? When she had thought it all over for quite a while, she concluded that her husband's indifference and sulkiness dated from the arrival of that box. It could not have been a Christmas nor a New Year's gift, since both of these festivals had been celebrated some time ago.

Seated that day at the dinner table, the unhappy wife launched the fatal subject of the discovered box. Dire confusion seized the culprit. Particles of food clogged his paralyzed throat. In vain he struggled, choked and sputtered, but no voice came forth, while his now thoroughly frightened wife bent over him and bestowed vehement spasmodic pats between his shoulder blades.

When he, at length, succeeded in regaining control of his vocal organs, he dashed from her hand the proffered glass of water, pushed her angrily from him, and amid frowns and curses, forbade her ever again to meddle with his affairs.

His moodiness, bad temper and silence increased, after this incident, perceptibly, and when he did venture a remark, it was full of unkindness against all humanity. From day to

day, he grew more unreasonable and pessimistic. Circumstances accumulated, which undoubtedly betrayed that a criminal secret lurked in the consciousness of Mr. Josias Heublein.

In his coat pocket, one day, the sorrowing and dejected wife found a postal receipt for Five Hundred Marks, signed by that mysterious B. Henning, the head of the International Klischee Company, and she remembered that the evening before its arrival, her dear Josias had remained alone in his rooms, and in the night she had heard him piteously groaning.

Upon one occasion, shortly after Mr. Heublein's departure for his office, Mrs. Heublein went to his room, in order that she might dust the furniture and bestow upon it those little dainty touches which only a devoted housewife understands. Hardly had she begun her labor of love and sorrow, when Mr. Heublein rushed up the steps, flushed and almost breathless, snatched a key from its accustomed hanging place, and departed as abruptly as he had come, without a word to the agitated little woman. The key belonged to an unused, spacious, adjoining closet. The former tenants had used it for a bed-room, but since the coming of the Heubleins, it had been entirely empty.

What did the closet contain? Was the skeleton there, which caused Mrs. Heublein so much heartache? Should she find here, the reason for Mr. Heublein's strange conduct, insomnia, harshness and declining affection?

The poor woman sat weeping, before the gloomy, foreboding wall which separated her from the guilty secret, when the door opened and Mrs. Rauscher appeared. She was in her most comforting and confidence-inviting mood, and soon won from the wife a confession of her husband's suspicious action concerning the closet key. Mrs. Rauscher was immediately impressed with the belief that the closet would disclose all they wished to know. She was in her native element now, and began the investigation without the assent or permission of the now almost hysterical wife.

Kneeling upon the floor, Mrs. Rauscher placed her sharp and penetrating eye on a level with the crevice under the door. The corner of a paper peeped over the threshold. With the help of her long belt-pin, she succeeded in drawing it forth, torn in fragments though it was, as she dragged it over some projecting tacks.

After the mutilated pieces were smoothed and joined, the following disconnected expressions were legible.

"_____ — _____ — _____
your beautiful _____ — _____
children, despite their beautiful _____
not disposed _____, and I must _____
_____ urgently _____ — _____
my exertions _____ — _____
very well _____ — _____ return by
freight."

Mrs. Rauscher read the patched fragments first. "I feared as much," she said in a significant tone, as she placed the criminating evidence before Mrs. Heublein.

"Children, Oh, he hasn't any. It must be a mistake."

"But you forget the red-haired girl at his old home," and straightening her green poke bonnet, she shook out her disarranged garments and left the distressed woman alone with her sorrow. "Don't despair," she said, "I shall soon return and this mystery will be unearthed."

Left alone, Mrs. Heublein's vivid imagination suggested to her, the whole horrible tragedy of Blue-beard and the sickening contents of his secret closet. It couldn't be wives, and oh,—the innocent little children. Surely they were not dead. He must be secreting them here alive. Josias was no murderer. He still was her beloved husband.

Here, Mrs. Rauscher re-appeared, accompanied by a lock-smith, who bore in his hands a great bundle of keys. "Let us now open the closet," she said in sepulchral tones.

But Mrs. Heublein was not inclined to favor such a proposition at all. Her eyes glowed, like those of an enraged lioness. Her aquiescent mood had suddenly changed into a mood of resolute but impenetrable decision. "Go,"

she said to the lock-smith, with an imperious wave of the hand.

"Don't be foolish," cried Mrs. Rauscher, "Bid him stay, and send also for a lawyer. In this closet there will be all the proofs you need for a divorce. You may depend upon that."

"Leave my house," said Mrs. Heublein, "and if you do not hold your tongue, I shall choke you." Then she sank down, in front of the closet, in a swoon. When she recovered, she pressed her ear to the crevice and listened. But it was as still in the closet, as in the grave.

What should she do? If Josias had done wrong, and there seemed no doubt of that, he should acknowledge it to her alone, and then, she would decide about the future.

In the mean-time, Mr. Heublein had gone for the first time in years, to the inn of the "Black Lamb," to drown his moodiness in a glass of beer. With astonishment, he noticed that an unusual number of his acquaintances were gathered there. Those whom he regarded as his best friends, however, held themselves painfully aloof, and others treated him with absolute contempt. More distant acquaintances threw out strange hints, regarding his domestic affairs, so that he could not at all understand what it meant. Shoulders were shrugged, and suspicious glances were cast upon him, until he grew almost desperate, and with the conclusion that all the world was going crazy, he turned his footsteps homeward.

His wife, in street attire, met him at the door. Seizing him by the arm, she led him to the closet.

"Open the closet," she commanded, in a shrill hoarse voice."

"But Minna," he remonstrated, "tell me why, and why you are dressed to go out?"

"Why, monster," she cried. "In this closet lie your shame, your infidelity, perhaps your crime."

"But Minna—to use such strong terms, for only a few innocent, youthful indiscretions."

"A few?" cried the enraged woman,

"You surely don't mean more than one. Are they, themselves, there?"

Josias nodded resignedly.

Mrs. Heublein shuddered visibly. "No doubt he is crazy," she thought. "Open it immediately, miserable man." "Dear God, I hope he has not killed them!"

"No, indeed," said Mr. Heublein, "they have died a natural death. I am only grieving for their costly burial."

Here, he opened the closet.

It was filled, from bottom to top, with beautifully bound books. One of the dainty volumes fell at the feet of Mrs. Heublein. She picked it up and read upon the title page.

APRIL CHILDREN,

LYRICAL POEMS.

BY

JOSIAS HEUBLEIN.

PUBLISHING HOUSE OF

H. HENNIG,
BERLIN.

"Just one thousand 'April Children,' little wife," he said. "They are all there. Not one is missing. These are my youthful sins, and I have honestly atoned for them all."

Mr. Heublein then explained that, he had after a long search, found a publisher for his youthful effusions, in the obliging and genial publisher of the suspected newspaper. He published the "April Children," as Mr. Heublein had christened them, for a

considerable amount of money, half of which was paid down, and the other half at the expiration of three years. But the books palled upon the market, and here they were in their final resting place.

Deeply moved, Mrs. Heublein embraced her poet, and begged him to forgive her suspicious stupidity and blindness.

At this moment, Mrs. Rauscher, who had been trying to eavesdrop just outside the door, appeared upon the scene. The sound of Mrs. Heublein's weeping had made her bold to defend the cause of the injured wife.

As a reward for her interest in their welfare, and her earnest efforts to solve the mystery, they presented her a copy of the "April Children," on sacred condition, that she would not breathe a word of their existence to any one, which promise she cheerfully gave.

But when, in all Mrs. Rauscher's former history, had she ever kept such a delicious bit of gossip to herself? It would be positively selfish, she argued, and there was nothing selfish about Mrs. Rauscher.

How she settled it with her conscience, no one ever knew. But the fact of the thing was, that the book-sellers were so incessantly besieged with calls for the "April Children," that they were finally obliged to purchase from Mr. Heublein the entire edition.

What the "International Klischee Company" and B. Henning of Berlin, had failed to accomplish in three years, Mrs. Rauscher had brought about in the same number of weeks. The "Youthful Sins" were disposed of, and Mr. Heublein had their worth in shining gold.



PATIENCE APPLEBY'S CONFESSING-UP.

“IT must be goin’ to rain. My arm aches me so I can’t hardly hold my knittin’ needles.”

“Hunk!” said Mrs. Winkoop. She twisted her thread around her finger two or three times to make a knot; then she held her needle up to the light and threaded it, closing one eye entirely and the other partially, and pursing her mouth until her chin was flattened and full of small wrinkles. Then she lowered her head and looking at Mrs. Willis over her spectacles said, with a kind of good-natured contempt—“Is that a sign o’ rain?”

“It never fails.” Mrs. Willis rocked back and forth comfortably. “Like ’s not it begins to ache me a hull week before it rains.”

“I never heard tell o’ such a thing in my born days,” said Mrs. Winkoop, shutting her lips together firmly, as she bent over the Canton-flannel night-shirt she was making for Mr. Winkoop.

“Well, mebbe you never. Mebbe you never hed the rheumatiz. I’ve hed it twenty years. I can’t get red o’ ’t anyways. I’ve tried the Century linamint—the one thet has the man ridin’ over snakes an’ things—an’ the arnicky, an’ ev’ry kind the drug-store keeps. I’ve wore salt ’n my shoes tell they turned white all over; an’ I kep’ a buckeye ’n my pockit tell it wore a hole an’ fell out. But I never get red o’ the rheumatiz.”

Mrs. Winkoop took two or three stitches in silence; then she said,

"Patience, now—she *can* talk o' havin' rheumatiz. She's mos' bent 'n two with it when she has it."

The rocking stopped abruptly. Mrs. Willis' brows met, giving a look of sternness to her face.

"That's a good piece o' cotton flannel," she said; "Hefty. Fer pity's sake! D' you put ruffles on the bottom o' Mr. Winkoop's night-shirts? What ever d' you do that fer?"

"Because he likes 'em that way," responded Mrs. Winkoop, tartly; "There's no call fer remark's, I see, Mis' Willis. You put a pockit 'n Mr. Willis's, an' paw never'd hev that—never!" firmly.

"Well, I never see ruffles on a man's night-shirt before," said Mrs. Willis, laughing rather aggravatingly. "But they do look real perty, anyways."

"The longer you live the more you learn." Mrs. Winkoop spoke condescendingly. "But talkin' about Patience—hev you seen her lately?"

"No, I aint." Mrs. Willis got up suddenly and began rummaging about on the table; there were two red spots on her thin face. "I'd mos' fergot to show you my new winter's underclo's. Aint them nice an' warm, though? They feel so good to my rheumatiz. I can't help thinkin' about them thet can't get any. My! aint it awful hard times? It makes me all of a trimble to think o' the winter here an' ev'rybody so hard up. I don't see what things 's a-comin' to."

"I don't, nuther. I don't see what Patience 's a-goin' to live on this winter. She aint fit to do anythin'; her rheumatiz is awful."

Mrs. Willis sat down again, but did not rock; she sat upright holding her back stiff and her thin shoulders high and level.

"I guess this tight spell 'll learn folks to lay by money when they get it," she said, sternly. "I notice we ain't got any mortgage on our place, an' I notice we got five thousan' dollars 'n the bank. We got some cattle, besides. We ain't frittered ev'rythin' we made away on fol-lals, like some's I know of. We hev things good an'

comf'terble, but we don't put on any style. Look at thet Mis' Abernathy! I caught her teeheein' behind my back when I was a buyin' red checked table cloths. Her husband's a bookkeeper! An' her a puttin' on airs over me thet c'u'd buy her up any day! Now, he's lost his place, an' I reckon she'll come down a peg or two."

"She's b'en reel good to Patience, anyways," said Mrs. Winkoop.

Mrs. Willis knitted so fast her needles fairly rasped together.

"She takes her in jell an' perserves right frequent. You mind Patience always liked sweet things even when her 'n Lizy was girls together, Eunice."

It was so unusual for one of these women to speak the other's name that they now exchanged quick looks of surprise. Indeed, Mrs. Winkoop seemed the more surprised of the two. But the hard, matter-of-fact expression returned at once to both faces. If possible, Mrs. Willis looked more grim and sour than before the unwonted address had startled her out of her composure.

"Well," she said, scarcely unclosing her thin lips; "I reckon she had all the sweet things she was hankering after when she was a girl. I reckon she hed a plenty an' to spare, an' I reckon they got to tastin' perty bitter a good spell ago. Too much sweet always leaves a bit'rish taste 'n the mouth. My religion's do what's right an' don't wink 't them thet does wrong. I've stuck to my religion. I reckon you won't get anybody to stan' up an' put their finger on anythin' wrong I've done. Let them thet's sinned"—she lifted her pale, cold eyes, now, and looked full at her visitor—"make allow'nce fer sinners, say I. Mis' Abernathy or Mis' Anybody else can pack all the clo's an' sweet things they want to Patience Appleby; mebbe they've sinned, too,—I do know. But I do know thet I ain't, an' so I don't pack sweet things to her 'f she is all doubled up with rheumatiz," unconsciously imitating Mrs. Winkoop's tone. "An' I don't make no

allowance for her sins, 'ither, Mis' Winkoop."

A faint color came slowly, as if after careful consideration, to Mrs. Winkoop's face.

"Ther' wa'n't no call fer you tellin' thet," she said, with a terrible calmness. "The hull town knows you w'u'dn't fergive a sin 'f your fergivin' it 'u'd save the sinner hisself from bein' lost! The hull town knows what your religion is, Mis' Willis. You set up an' call yourself perfect, an' wrap yourself up 'n yourself"—

"There comes the men-folks—sh!" said Mrs. Willis. Her face relaxed somewhat. She began to knit industriously. But the temptation to have the last word was strong.

"It ain't my religion, 'ither," she said, her voice losing none of its determination because it was lowered; "I'd 'a' fergive her 'f she'd 'a' confessed up. We all tried to get her to; I tried more'n anybody. I told her,"—in a tone of conviction—"that nobody but a hussy 'u'd do what she'd done an' not confess up to 't—an' 't never fazed her; she w'u'dn't confess up to it."

The men were scraping their feet, now, on the scraper, and Mrs. Willis leaned back with a complacent expression, expecting no reply. But Mrs. Winkoop surprised her. She was sewing the last pearl-button on the night-shirt, and as she drew the thread through and fastened it with scrupulous care, she said, without looking up—"I don't take much stock 'n confessin's myself, Mis' Willis. I don't see just how confessin's 's good fer the soul when they hurt so many innocent ones 's well 's the guilty one. Ev'ry confessin-up affex somebody else; an' so I say 'f you repent an' want to attone you can do 't 'ithout confessin' an' bringin' disgrace on others. I don't say 't won't be hard. Sin 's a good deal like a wild rose thick't"—she did not mean to be poetical; "it's easy to get in, but when the branches close up in a reg'lar net around you, it ain't so all-fired easy to get out. But you can do 't 'f you make up your mind—'ithout

confessin' up, too. Mis' Willis, 'f some confessin' ups was done 'n this town that I know of, some people 'u'd be affected that 'u'd surprise you." Then she lifted up her voice, cheerfully. "Well, father d'you bring the lantern? I reckon we'd best go right home; it's a gettin' latish, an' Mis' Willis thinks, from her rheumatiz it's a goin' to rain."

Mrs. Willis sat knitting for a long time after Mr. Willis had gone to bed. Her face was more stern even than usual. She sat uncomfortably erect, and did not rock. When the clock told ten she arose slowly and rolled the half finished stocking around the ball of yarn, fastening it there with the needles. Then she laid it on the table and stood looking at it intently, without seeing it. "I wonder," she said, at last, drawing a deep breath; "I wonder what she was drivin' at. I'd give a perty to know."

"Mother, where's my Sund'y pulse-warmers at?"

"I do' know where your Sund'y pulse-warmers are at. Father, you're so aggravatin'! You don't half look up anythin', an' then begin askin' me where it's at. What's under that bunch o' collars ther' 'n your draw'r? Looks some like your Sund'y pulse-warmers, don't it? This ain't Sund'y, anyways. Wa'n't your everyday ones good enough to wear just to a church meetin'?"

Mr. Willis had never been known to utter an oath; but sometimes he looked as if his heart was full of them.

"I reckon you don't even know where your han'ke'cher 's at, father."

"Yes, I do, mother. I guess you'd best stop talkin', an' come on now—I'm all ready."

He preceded his wife, leaving the front door open for her to close and lock. He walked stiffly, holding his head straight, so his collar would not cramp his neck or pick his chin. He had a conscious, dressed-up air. He carried in one hand a lantern, and in the other an umbrella. It was seven o'clock of a Thursday evening and the bell was ringing for prayer-meeting.

There was to be a church meeting afterward, at which the name of Patience Appleby was to be brought up for membership. Mrs. Willis breathed hard and deep as she thought about it.

She walked behind her husband, to receive the full light from the lantern, holding her skirts up high above her gaiter-tops, which were so large and so worn as to elastic, that they fairly ruffled around her spare, flat ankles. Her shadow danced in fragments on the picket fence. After a while she said: "Father, I wish you w'u'dn't keep swingin' that lantern so; I can't see where to step. Who's thet ahead o' us?"

"I can't make out yet."

"No wonder—you keep swingin' thet lantern so. Father, what does *possess* you to be so aggravatin'? If I'd 'a' asked you to swing 't, you c'u'dn't 'a' b'en drug to do't!"

Mrs. Willis was guiltless of personal vanity, but she did realize the importance of her position in village society; and something of this importance was imparted to her carriage as she followed Mr. Willis up the church aisle. She felt that every eye was upon her with respect, and she carried herself with dignity, holding her shoulders so high that her comfortable shawl fell therefrom in fuller folds than usual. She sat squarely in the pew, looking straight before her, her hands folded firmly in her lap. She had never been able to understand how Sister Stevens who sat in the pew in front of the Willises, could always hold her head bent to one side, like a giddy, sixteen-year-old girl. Mrs. Willis abominated such actions in a respectable, married woman of family. Mr. Willis crouched down uneasily in the corner of the seat, and sat motionless, with a self-conscious blush across his weak eyes. His umbrella, banded so loosely that it bulged like a soiled clothes bag, stood up against the back of the next pew.

At the close of prayer-meeting nobody stirred from his seat. An ominous silence fell upon the two dozen people assembled there. The clock ticked

loudly, and old lady Scranton, who suffered of asthma, wheezed with every breath, and whispered to her neighbor that she was getting so phthisicy she wished to mercy they'd hurry or she'd have to go home. At last one of the deacons arose and stated with great solemnity that he understood sister Winkoop had a name to propose for membership.

When Mrs. Winkoop stood up she looked pale but determined. Mrs. Willis would not turn to look at her, but she heard every word spoken.

"Yes," said Mrs. Winkoop, "I want to bring up the name o' Patience Appleby. I reckon you all know Patience Appleby. She was born here, an' she's always lived here. There's them thet say she done wrong onct, but I guess she's about attoned-up fer thet. I've know her fifteen year, an' I do' know any better behavin' woman anywheres. She never talks about anybody"—her eyes went to Mrs. Willis' rigid back—"an' she never complains. She's alone an' poor 'an all crippled up with the rheumatiz. She want's to join church an' live a Christian life, an' I fer one 'm in favor o' us holdin out our hand an' helpin' her up."

"Amen!" somebody said, in a loud voice. There was a general rustle of commendation—whispers back and forth, noddings of heads, and many encouraging glances directed toward sister Winkoop.

But suddenly silence fell upon the little assembly. Mrs. Willis had arisen. Her expression was grim and uncompromising. At that moment sister Shidler's baby choked in its sleep and cried so loudly and so gaspingly that every one turned to look at it.

Mr. Willis caught hold of his wife's dress and tried to pull her down, but he only succeeded in ripping a handful of gathers from the band. Mrs. Willis looked down at him from her thin height.

"You let my gethers be," she said, sternly; "You might a' knew you'd tear 'em a-takin' holt of 'em that-away!"

Then quiet was restored, and the wandering eyes came back to Mrs. Willis. "Brothers and sisters," she said; "It ain't becomin' 'n me to remind you-all what Mr. Willis an' me hev done fer this church. I reckon, though, you-all recollect about the org'n an' the new bell an' the carpet fer the aisles—let alone our payin' twenty dollars more a year than any other member. I say 't ain't becomin' 'n me; an' I never 'd mention 't if it w'a'n't that I don't feel like havin' Patience Appleby 'n this church. If she does come in, *I* stay out."

A tremor passed through the meeting. The minister turned pale and stroked his meagre whiskers nervously. He believed in saving souls, and he had prayed and pleaded with Patience to persuade her to unite with the church, but he had not had the faintest presentiment that he was quarreling with his own bread-and-butter in so doing. One soul scarcely balances a consideration like that—especially when a minister has six children and an invalid wife. It was small wonder that he looked pale.

"I want that you all sh'u'd know just how I feel about it," continued Mrs. Willis. "I believe 'n doin' what's right yourself an' not excusin' them that does wrong. I don't believe 'n havin' people like Patience Appleby 'n this church; an' she don't come in while *I'm* in, neither. Thet's all I got to say. I want that you-all sh'u'd know that her comin' in means my goin' out."

Mrs. Willis sat down, well satisfied. She saw that she had produced a profound sensation. Every eye turned to the minister with a look that said plainly—"What have you to say to *that*?" But the minister had nothing whatever to say to it. He stroked his whiskers, carefully avoiding Mrs. Winkoop's eyes. At last Deacon Fish said—"Why, Mis' Willis, I think 'f a body repents an' wants to do better, the church 'ad ort to help 'em."

Mrs. Willis cleared her throat. "I don't consider that a body's repented," Deacon Fish, tell he confesses-up.

Patience Appleby's never done thet to this day. Whenever she does I'm willin' to take her into this church."

"Brothers an' sisters," said Mrs. Winkoop, in a voice that held a kind of cautious triumph; "I fergot to state that Patience Appleby reckoned 's how somebody might think she'd ort to confess-up before she joined church; an' she wanted I sh'u'd ask the meetin' to 'point Mis' Willis a committee o' one fer her to confess-up to. She reckoned if she c'u'd satisfy Mis' Willis, ev'rybody else 'u'd be satisfied."

"Why—yes," said the minister, eagerly; "That's all right. I know Mrs. Willis and Patience will be able to smooth over all difficulties. I think we may consider the meeting dismissed."

"Whatever 'd she do thet fer?" said Mrs. Willis, as she followed the lantern homeward. "She's got some-thin' 'n her mind, *I* know. Father, what made you pull my gethers out? D'you think you c'u'd make me set down when I'd make up my mind to hev my say? This is my secon'-best dress, an' I've only wore 't one winter."

"You hadn't ort to get up an' make a fool o' yourself, mother. You'd best leave Patience Appleby alone."

"You'd ort to talk about anybody makin' a fool of hisself! After you a-pullin' my gethers clean out o' the band, right 'n meetin' You'd ort to tell me I'd best leave Patience Appleby alone! I don't mean to leave her alone. I mean to let her know she can't ac' scan'lous an' then set herself up's bein' good's church folks. *I'll* give her comup'in's!"

For probably the first time in his married life Mr. Willis yielded to his feelings. "Goda'mighty, mother," he said; "sometimes you don't seem to have common sense! I reckon you'd best leave Patience Appleby alone!" Then, frightened at what he had said, he walked on hurriedly, swinging the lantern farther than ever. Mrs. Willis walked behind him, dumb.

Mrs. Willis opened the broken-down

gate that led to Patience Appleby's house with difficulty. The day was cold, and there was a foot of snow on the ground. The path to the old, shabby house was trackless. Not a soul had been there since the snow fell—and that was two days ago! Mrs. Willis shivered under her warm shawl.

Patience opened the door. She was very tall and thin. She stooped, and her chest was sunken. She wore a dingy gray dress, mended in many places. There was a little, checked, three-cornered shawl around her shoulders. She coughed before she could greet her visitor.

"How-d' you-do, Mis' Willis," she said, at last; "Come in, won't you?"

"How-do' you-do, Patience," Mrs. Willis said, and, to her own amazement, her voice did not sound as stern as she had intended. She had been practicing as she came along, and this voice bore no resemblance to the one she had had in her mind. Nor, as she preceded Patience down the bare, draughty hall to the sitting-room, did she bear herself with that degree of dignity which she had always considered most fitting to her position, both socially and morally.

Somehow, the evidences of poverty on every side chilled her blood. The sitting-room was worse than the hall. A big, empty room with a small fireplace in one corner, wherein a few coals were turning gray; a threadbare carpet, a couple of chairs, a little table with the Bible on it, ragged wall-paper, and a shelf in one corner filled with liniment bottles. Mrs. Willis sat down, and Patience, after stirring up the coals, took the other chair. "I'm afraid the room feels coolish," she said; "I've got the last o' the coal on."

"D' you mean," said Mrs. Willis—and again her voice surprised her—"that you're all out o' coal?"

"All out." She drew the tiny shawl closer to her throat. "But Mis' Abernathy said she'd send me a scuttleful to-day. Sence I've hed the rheumatiz so bad I can't earn anythin', so I have to do 'ithout lots."

Mrs. Willis stared hard at the coals.

For the moment she could think of nothing but her own basement filled to the ceiling with coal.

"I reckon," said Patience, "you've come to hear my confessin'-up."

"Why—yes." Mrs. Willis started guiltily.

"What's the charges agen me, Mis' Willis?"

Mrs. Willis' eyelids fell heavily.

"Why, I reckon you know, Patience. You done wrong onct when you was a girl, an' I don't think we'd ort to take you 'n the church till you own up to it."

There was a little silence; then Patience said, drawing her breath heavily. "Mebbe I did do wrong onct when I was a little girl—only fifteen, say. But thet's twenty years ago, an' even if I did, I don't think I'd ort to own up to it."

"I think you'd ort."

Mis' Willis—"Patience spoke solemnly—"d'you think I'd ort to own up 'f it 'u'd affeck somebody else thet ain't never b'en talked about?"

"Yes, I do," said Mrs. Willis, firmly. "F they deserve to be talked about, they'd ort to be talked about."

"Even if it was about the best folks 'n town?"

"Yes." Mrs. Willis thought of the minister.

"Even if it was about the best-off folks? Folks thet hold their head the highest, an' give mos' to churches an' missionary, an' thet ev'rybody looks up to?"

"Ye-es," said Mrs. Willis, hesitatingly. That did not describe the minister, certainly. She could not have told you why her heart began to beat so violently. Somehow, she had been surprised out of the attitude she had meant to assume. Instead of walking in boldly and giving Patience her come-up'in's, she was having all she could do to conquer a feeling of pity for the enemy because she was poor and cold. She must harden her heart.

"Even"—Patience lowered her eyes to the worn carpet—"if it was folks who'd b'en loudes' condemnin'

other folk's sins, an' which bragged high an' low that ther' wa'n't no disgrace 'n their fam'ly an' never hed b'en, an' who'd just about be killed by my confessin'-up?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Willis, sternly; but she paled to the lips.

"Well, then," said Patience, slowly; "I'll do 't; but mind, I don't want to. I guess you rec'lect, Mis' Willis, thet your Lizy an' me was just the same age to a day?"

Mrs. Willis' lips moved, but the word stopped in her throat.

"An' how we ust to play together ev'ry day, an' stay nights with each other. We *loved* each other, Mis' Willis. You ust to give us big slices o' salt-risin' bread, spread with thick cream an' sprinkled with brown sugar—I can just see you, now, a-goin' out to the spring-house to get the cream! An' I can just taste 't, too, when I get good an' hungry."

"What's all this got to do 'ith your ownin' up?" interrupted Mrs. Willis, fiercely. "What's my 'Lizy got to do 'ith your goin' away thet time?"

"Where was you thet time, Patience Appleby?"

"I'm comin' to thet," said Patience, calmly, but a dull flush came upon her face. "I've attened-up fer thet time, 'f ever any mortal did. I've hed a hard life an' I've never complained, because I thought the Lord was punishin' me.

"But I hev suffered. Twenty year Mis' Willis, o' prayin' to be fergive for one sin! But I ain't never see the day I c'u'd confess up to 't—an' I c'u'du't now, except to Lizy's mother."

An awful trembling shook Mrs. Willis' heart. She looked at Patience with straining eyes. "Go on," she said, hoarsely.

"Lizy an' me was fifteen on the same day. She was goin' to visit friends at Four Corners, but I hed to stay 't home an' work. I was cryin' about 't when all of a sudden 'Lizy says—'Patience, let's hev a good time on our birthday!'

"Well, let's," says I, "but how?"

"I'll start fer Four Corners an' then

you run away, an' I'll meet you, an' we'll go to Springville to the circus, an' learn to ride bareback"—

Mrs. Willis leaned forward in her chair, her face was very white; her thin hands were clinched till her knuckles stood out half an inch. "Patience Appleby," she said, "you're a wicked, sinful liar! May the Lord a'mighty forgive you—I won't."

"I ain't askin' you to take my word; you can ask Mr. Willis. He didn't go to Springville to buy a horse, like he told you he did. Lizy an' me 'd b'en with the circus a week when she tuk sick, an' I sent fer Mr. Willis unbeknownst to anybody. He come an' tuk her home, an' give out thet he'd stopped at Four Corners fer her. But I hed to sneak home alone an' live 'n' outcast's life, an' see her set up above me—just because Mr. Willis begged me on his knees never to tell she was with me. An' I never told a soul, Mis' Willis, tell I hed a fever las' winter an' told Mis' Winkoop when I was out o' my head. But she's never told anybody, an' we never will. Mr. Willis's helped me's much 's he c'u'd 'ithout your knowin' it, but I know how 't feels to be hungry an' cold. An' I know how 't feels to see Lizy set up over me, an' marry rich an' good, an' hev nice children, an' ride by 'n her kerriage, dressed 'n silk, an' never lookin' at me—chokin' with the dust off o' her wheels. But I never complained none, an' I ain't now. Puttin' Lizy down w'u'dn't help me any. But I do think 'ts hard 'f I can't be let into the church."

Her thin voice died away and there was silence. Patience sat staring at the coals with the dulness of despair on her face. Mrs. Willis' spare frame had suddenly taken on an old, pathetic stoop. What her haughty soul had suffered during that recital, for which she had been so totally unprepared, Patience never realized. The world seemed to be slipping from under the old woman's trembling feet. She had been so strong in her condemnation of sinners, because she had felt so sure she should never have any trading with

sin herself; and lo! all these years her own daughter—her one beloved child, dearer than life itself—had been guilty as this poor outcast from whom she had drawn aside her skirts as from a leper. Ay, her daughter had been the guiltier of the two. She was not spared that bitterness even. Her harsh sense of justice forced her to acknowledge, even in that first hour, that this woman had acted nobly, while her daughter had been a despicable coward.

It had been an erect, middle-aged woman who had come to give Patience Appleby her come-up'-in's; it was an old, broken-spirited one who went stumbling home in the early, cold twilight of the winter day, and who, entering her comfortable home, went into her bedroom and fell upon her knees and prayed as she had never prayed before.

When Mr. Willis came home to supper he found his wife setting the table, as usual. He started to go into the bedroom, but she stopped him. "You're goin' to use the front bed-

room after this, father," she said.

"Why, what's thet fer, mother?"

"I'm a-goin' to give our'n to Patience Appleby."

"You're a-goin' to what!"

"I'm a-goin' to give our'n to Patience Appleby. I'm a-goin' to bring her here to live, an' she's got to hev the warmest room, 'cause her rheumatiz 's worse 'n mine. I'm agoin' fer her myself to-morr', 'n the kerriage." She turned and faced her husband, stonily. "She's confessed-up ev'rythin.' I know where she was at thet time, an' who was with her. I reckon I'd best be attonin'-up 's well 's Patience Appleby, an' I'm goin' to begin by makin' her comf'terble, an' takin' her into church."

"Why, mother," said the old man, weakly; but his wife repressed him with one look.

"I reckon you'd best not meddle, father," she said, sternly. "You get an' wash yourself. I want thet you sh'u'd hold the candle while I fry the apple-flitters."

Ella Higginson.

SYLVIA TRUEHEART'S LEADING.

“THE morning glories are in bloom.”

“I should think so.”

Sylvia Trueheart turned a very rosy face toward the garden gate. The light in her eyes brought a smile to the somewhat anxious face of a young man who was entering, and who lifted his hat as he bade her good morning.

Sylvia walked down the path to meet him, and to invite him to go and look at her pet moss-rose bush, now in full bloom in a distant corner of the garden. She knew that his worldly form of greeting had been noted by her gentle Quaker mother. She had heard an ominous sigh as she stood outside the living-room window, and she preferred that her visitor should not stand too near that window. She well knew the substance of the speech that her mother was, at that very moment, making to her twin sisters—Patience and Faith.

“I fear that Mark Strong is quite turned away from the simplicity of the Gospel, and I do not like to have Sylvia company with him so much. She is still a child, and her affections go out to any one who is kind to her. Mark does not come to the meeting, and I hear that he is thinking of being a jeweller. I do not like the trade at all. It is not seemly for a birthright member of Friends to spend this short life in buying and selling those things that foster vanity and worldliness.”

“Well, mother,” answered Faith, cheerily, “don’t let’s be anxious. That isn’t according to Friends’ testimony, thee knows. Sylvia is only a child, as thee says, and she doesn’t clearly know her own mind. I hear that Mark is soon to locate in Concord, and Sylvia is so full of her work and her studies and her dreams, that she will probably forget him.”

“Nev—,” began Ruth Trueheart, the mother of these maidens, and sud-

denly stopped with a blush which greatly surprised them. “There!” she added, hastily, “he is going. Please call thy sister, Patience.”

“She is coming,” said Faith.

A moment after, Sylvia came in, and took her seat at the table.

“Mark made thee an early call, daughter,” observed her mother, after the silent blessing.

“He just came in to look at the flowers,” answered the girl; “and to tell me that Aunt Patience is down again with one of her ill-turns. He was on his way to the post office. He always goes for the first mail, thee knows. He is expecting—”

Sylvia stopped to answer a knock at the door.

A tall girl, with dark eyes, large and brilliant, and whose whole face and presence seemed to speak before her voice was heard, entered the living-room. It was as if the sunlight had suddenly flooded the room, and a singing bird had floated in. All at the table looked up smiling, to meet the happy eyes of Laura Stevens, a favorite niece of Ruth Trueheart.

“I’ve got something just splendid to tell you,” exclaimed Laura, almost out of breath.

“Truly, thee looks like it,” answered her aunt; “but sit down and have some breakfast with us, while thee talks.”

“No, thank thee, Auntie,” said the girl; “I mean, I’ve had my breakfast; but I will sit here at the table with you while I talk; and you go right on eating, please. There, Patience! before I forget,—mother wanted me to ask you if you would come over and sit with her a little while this afternoon. She is not feeling well, and I am expected at a committee meeting. I would stay with her, but she will not hear of my giving up the meeting.”

“We heard that she was suffering from an ill turn,” remarked Ruth Trueheart.

"Yes," answered Laura, "but she is better now, than she was last evening, or I would not leave, certainly."

"Well," said Patience, "I will go, if nothing prevents. Now for thy news."

"O yes! there is to be a grand celebration of the semi-centennial of Peace Seminary, in September. All the old teachers and scholars are to be invited; and you, Sylvia Trueheart, are to write a poem for the occasion. Your formal invitation to do so will arrive by the first mail; for I wrote it last evening. Isn't it splendid, you blush-rose? You must wear the daintiest pink dress, when you read, with forget-me-nots at your girdle, and a rose in your hair."

Love, motherly pride, and anxiety filled the mother's eyes. Sylvia's were large with honest surprise, delight and thankfulness. She loved Peace Seminary next to her own home, and she had a girl's love for verse-making

"I shall be very glad to do it, if I can."

"Of course thee can," exclaimed Faith.

"Well, get your rhyming dictionary out, and be busy, little wood-nymph," said Laura, "and no doubt, your muse will be good to you."

"She hasn't any rhyming dictionary," explained her mother "but I doubt not she will spin thee a poem, if she tries."

"She needs no rhyming dictionary but the one in her own head," remarked Patience, with a smile.

"Don't thee remember, Mother, how thee hired her once, when she was a little girl, not to rhyme for a month, because thee was so tired of hearing her talk in rhyme? It was hard work for her to finish the month in prose. Mother had to forgive her two or three rhymes in the time. I remember one was,

'If thou wilt forgive me mother,
I'll try not to make another:
For this month of June, I mean,
I will keep my record clean.'

And I verily believe she didn't know she had been making rhymes until we all laughed. Mother said, 'Thee's a hard case, Sylvia, but thee means well;' and, when the month was out, she was

rewarded for her honest efforts; but she was soon rhyming again as badly as ever. She was nine years old then; but she was a little bit of a girl; she didn't look more than seven.

"A true poet, 'born, not made,'" said Laura. "Well, I must go. I have a thousand and one things to do. There! I beg Aunt Ruth's pardon. I am truly trying to break myself of that bad habit of exaggeration, that she dislikes so much. At any rate, I have two or three things to attend to, before night, I'll send you up some dress-patterns, Sylvia, for you to select from; and I am to have the honor of making your dress, and you are to concentrate your mind upon the poem. Farewell."

Laura was gone.

Sylvia sat looking out of the window with an absent, dreamy look, very familiar to her mother and sisters.

"I hope," said Ruth Trueheart, gently, "that thee will dress with simplicity, as becometh a member of our society, not with unseemly display of worldly finery."

"Does thee object to pink, Mother?" asked Faith, touching Sylvia's cheek with a pink rose. "Our Father seems to use it freely in His works."

Faith spoke reverently; and Mother Trueheart, looking at the rose, and at Sylvia's blooming cheek, was silent.

"Sylvia always has her own way," remarked Faith, "though she never uses many words to get it."

"Thee and Faith have always indulged her; she'd have been spoiled, if it had not been for her wide-awake conscience."

"Thee has never indulged her, I suppose," cried Faith, with most gentle irony.

"Well, I don't want to be too strict," answered the mother, with a sigh. "Sylvia is a good girl; but I sometimes fear she loves the world too much. I sometimes regret that I let her go to singing school, though I know that many Friends now favor singing; but I was taught to sing and make melody in my heart, and it still seems to me the better way. Sylvia's voice is often praised, and I fear—"

Mother Trueheart paused, as Sylvia's voice rang out, clear and sweet, in the words from an old hymn:

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wing,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things—"

The singing stopped suddenly, and the sound of the garden gate closing drew the attention of the family.

A boy of thirteen or fourteen years came up the piazza-steps, whistling a decidedly worldly air.

Faith opened the door, and the boy, looking a little surprised and doubtful, asked:

"Does Miss Sylvia Trueheart live here!"

"Yes," answered a voice behind Faith, who turned to see Sylvia, decked with a blue sweeping-cap, and carrying a broom.

"Here's your mail, miss," said the boy, "an' a parcel." A fellow down to the station asked me to bring um up. He seemed to be in an awful hurry, said you'd understand, an he was goin' to take the next train, and would you tell his mother that he was called away on business."

"Yes, certainly," said Sylvia, "thank you for bringing the things. If you'll come in, I'll pay you for your trouble."

"'Twa'n't no trouble; I don't want no pay," called the boy from the gate. Then he uttered a whistle so shrill that Faith stopped her ears, and he was off, to catch up with another boy.

Sylvia would fain have returned immediately to her room, but six pairs of curious eyes were fixed on the "parcel," and she could not find it on her heart to disappoint them. Slipping the letters into her pocket, she sat down between the twins, and removed the wrappers from a jewelry box. Mother Trueheart's eyes were on her youngest daughter's face, as the small, trembling fingers opened the box, and took out a gold watch attached to a delicate chain. A small gold and pearl pencil was added as a charm.

"Oh, what a dear little watch!" exclaimed the impulsive girl. "I never expected to have a watch all my own.

See, Mother, aren't these forget-me-nots on the case beautiful?"

"Yes, daughter," answered the mother, "and thee never will forget him, I see."

Sylvia made an excuse to carry her painfully blushing face out of the room. She left her watch with Patience. Ruth Trueheart sat looking into space, her eyes shining with tears, while Patience carefully examined watch, chain and pencil; and Faith went about her morning work.

"Don't be sad, Mother," said Patience, looking up at her suddenly, and noting the tears; "Mark is a good man, if he doesn't think just as we do on religious matters."

"How does thee know that Mark Strong sent the gift?" asked Faith.

"By strong, internal evidence," answered Patience, laying the watch carefully into the box, and giving it back to Sylvia who had just returned.

II.

Patience had discovered more "internal evidence" than she had thought it expedient to make clearly known. In examining the pencil-charm, she found that it contained a tiny microscope, which, in turn, revealed a photograph of Mark Strong. The same discovery was made by Sylvia, after she had seated herself at a little table, in her unfinished attic-room. Many a dream had she dreamed here; and, this morning, the fairest air-castle that she had ever built floated up, and out through the brown old rafters, unhindered.

Sylvia was ten years younger than her twin sisters. Some of the members of "the meeting" still told how the two bright-faced little girls, looking "as like as two peas," had stopped them on the street to say:

"We've got a little baby-sister: God gave her to Mother yesterday, while we were at school."

Ruth Trueheart had called the little one her "evening star:" for it had been born after the death of its father, David Trueheart, and brought light in-

to a home that had been darkened with grief. A very poor home, many would have called it. Nearly two hundred years old, its original form had been unchanged, except by the addition of a piazza, made by David himself, when the family doctor had said that Ruth must leave house-hold cares, and live as much as possible in the open air, and she had refused to incur the expense of leaving home. David had said:

"Well, we shall turn thee out of the house every day, at any rate, as soon as I can get a piazza ready for thee; and as for the housework, the little girls and I'll manage that. We'll play it's a summer cottage, and then it'll be all right."

Only one carpet was ever laid in the house, and that was home-made. It now covered the parlor floor. The furniture was scanty and much worn.

David Trueheart had been an elder in the Friends' meeting, and Ruth loved the Friends with all her heart. The twins followed faithfully in the footsteps of father and mother. They strove to be faithful to the "inner light," they wore the Quaker garb, they spoke the "plain language." But Sylvia! She was almost in all ways unlike her sisters. "An odd one in the family," the neighbor's said, and some smiled, and some sighed, when they said it.

"It beats all," said Uncle Reuben, the shoe-maker, who came to measure the twins' feet, when the new baby was six weeks old. "Why, that young one's hair's jest as yeller's gold, an' curls all over it's blessed little cocoanut, an' looks, for all the world, jest like a hallo. A reg'lar-built angel, I should call her, an' no disrespect to them up in heaven, nuther. See them blue eyes, now; look's if they'd been made up out of a piece of sky that had been left over; shine, too, like them little suns you see in the dew a-mornin's. Oh! I'm afraid you won't keep her, Ruth. Everybody an' everything goes where they belong, 'cordin' to my observations. Hity-tity! What's the matter of you two?"

The kind old man looked over his spectacles in genuine dismay at the twins. Their faces were covered with

gingham aprons, and they were sobbing violently in concert. He placed his rough hands caressingly on the two glossy, black heads, and two tearful little faces looked up at him.

"We don't want baby to go to Heaven," said Faith, in a broken voice.

"Go to Heaven! Of course not. Did I say anything about her goin' to Heaven? She won't go there yet a while, I guess. Leastways, I'll remember her at the throne of grace, every day."

The twins took heart again. They did not clearly understand Uncle Reuben's phraseology; but his words and his looks gave them hope that the remembrance promised would keep the the baby from unfolding hidden wings, before her time; and would keep away the kindred angels who might otherwise try to coax her to Heaven, before she had fairly tried earth. They were comforted.

She was a child of surprises.

She never crept; but, when she was one year and one day old, she stood straight up on her plump feet, and laid her dainty hand on the old Trueheart settle, and resolutely walked from one end of it to the other. According to family tradition, her great grand-mother, Prudence Trueheart, had done the same thing, at about the same age, a hundred years before; but the intermediate generations had been contented to creep first, after the usual fashion of baby-kind. Sylvia was very sparing of her words, until she was two years old, when she began to talk, chiefly in the interrogative form, until Patience and Faith begged their mother not to let Baby ask so many questions, it being truly humiliating to have to say "I don't know," so many times to a mite of a tot like her. When she was three years old, Ruth Trueheart's anxieties for her began, lest this 'child of light' should wander into the darkness of the world; for she sang as naturally as the birds that she loved to feed; and, alas! she was particularly fond of "vain and worldly" songs, such as, "Shoo, fly, don't bodder me," and other like jingles, learned from the chore-boy.

Later, she pursed up her lips, and sounded forth a genuine whistle, to the horror, not only of her mother, but even of the twins, who had been duly admonished of the "bad end" awaiting "whistling girls and crowing hens." The habit of making rhymes seemed somewhat less reprehensible. Mother Trueheart was constrained to acknowledge that very worthy Friends had made verses; and, after one or two attempts to induce Sylvia to talk wholly in prose for stated intervals, by offering her rewards, she allowed her to rhyme to her heart's content. As for the twins, they thought their little sister a wonderful and most charming child, and watched the unfolding of her mind and character, with full faith that their home sheltered a veritable genius, of whom the world would yet be proud; but this idea made the mother shudder inwardly, lest the child's heart should be filled with vanity.

Sylvia was now nineteen years old, and a beautiful and tantalizing riddle to all the meeting. She seemed to put on fair colors and tints in her dress, as naturally as the flowers in her beloved garden. With her friends of other societies she could not deem it a sin to use the pronoun "you" in the singular number, and she had gradually extended the custom to some of the younger Quakers. Yet she loved the plain language, and always used it in speaking to her mother and sisters. And she sincerely loved the Friends' meeting. She had even been moved, at times, to break the silence by a few such words as moved the gray-robed saints around her to praise God that the heart of this maiden was verily illumined by the divine light. She was often "tenderly treated with" by elderly members, who felt "a concern of mind" for the apparently self-contradictory little Quaker; and she listened respectfully to all their exhortations, thanked them, and went serenely on her way.

And now her way led through enchanted grounds. She wondered, sitting in her attic-room, if the world held many girls as happy as herself. She had taken from her pocket the letters

brought by Mark's messenger, and opened one addressed in Mark's handwriting. It was very short; it had been written at the railroad station:

"A telegram calls me away on business. I have no time to go back to say to you what I meant to say to you this evening. But you must know it all, my darling! I send you a gift with the deepest love of my heart. I have chosen one that will help adorn you at the reunion. It is a self-gratification; you need no adornment. I hope to be back in time to hear you read your poem in the dear old seminary. Meanwhile, write often, and always believe, whatever may happen, that I am

Faithfully yours,
MARK STRONG.

Sylvia buried this letter in the depths of an old-fashioned writing desk.

The second was the invitation to write the poem. This, with two other letters from family connections, she laid aside, to take down to her mother and sisters, heartily hoping that no one would ask, "Was there anything more?"

When, at last, she was ready to go down, she found the living-room empty. A second letter from Aunt Patience had summoned Ruth Trueheart and the twins to her home, a mile away.

"They said you needn't come, unless they sent for you," said the chore-boy. "They said you'd better go to work on your po'try right off, 'coss no knowing what might happen."

The vague suggestion of the last words brought a shadow of trouble and perplexity over Sylvia's happy eyes. Aunt Patience had had "ill-turns," at frequent intervals, ever since Sylvia could remember; but now it flashed across her mind, that the dear old face had, of late, seemed to grow steadily whiter and more heavenly. How strange it would seem, if it should vanish altogether. A pang shot through her heart at the thought. Aunt Patience was her mother's elder sister, Laura's mother, and very dear to all the family.

Sylvia hesitated a moment, and then said:

"Well, Ted, I am going down to the Balm-of-Gilead tree. If they send for me, let me know at once. I shall be

back, at all events, in time to give thee thy dinner." "That's all right," answered the boy, good-naturedly. "I guess I shouldn't starve, if I didn't have no dinner, for once. I used to go without my dinner half the time."

"I hope such a life will never be thine again," said the girl; and, taking a hat from a peg near the door, she went out. In a moment she was in the shade of a grove behind the house. For a few minutes, she turned the leaves of her Classical Dictionary, trying to find some mythological story on which to base her poem; but she found none that just suited her mood; so she closed her book, and opened eyes, and ears, and heart, to the influences around and within her.

III.

"I suppose that Mark will come to the reunion?" observed Faith, with the rising inflection.

"I suppose so," answered Sylvia, taking up a watering pot and going out into the garden, over which long shadows were falling.

"I wouldn't say anything to her about Mark," said the mother. "I think the dear child is under deep concern of mind, and I believe that she will finally conquer the temptation into which she has been led. I found her Discipline open in her room yesterday at——"

Ruth Trueheart stepped to a stand in a corner of the living-room and took from it her own copy the "New England Discipline."

"Here it is," she continued, turning the leaves carefully, to the 102nd page. "There were tears on this paragraph, my precious little girl's tears."

She read aloud:

"In contemplating the engagement of marriage, look principally to that which will help you on your heavenly journey. Pay filial regard to the judgment of your parents. Bear in mind the vast importance in such a union, of an accordance in religious principles and practice. Ask counsel of God; desiring above all temporal considerations, that your union may be blessed of God."

Ruth Trueheart closed the book. Sylvia's voice, singing softly, as she watered the flowers, came through the open window.

"Mother," broke out Faith, suddenly, "does thee really think it a sin to marry out of meeting?"

"I think it a great risk," answered her mother, her face turning very pale as she spoke,

"But, mother," persisted Faith, "thee knows there are true Christians in other societies. If thee had really——"

She did not finish the sentence; the pallor of her mother's face frightened her.

"Well, Mark is in the meeting," she said; "he is a birthright member. Sylvia will, perhaps, win him back to his old ways of going to the meeting."

"We will trust God," replied the mother, and went out of the room just as Sylvia came in from the garden. She was followed by her cousin Laura, who brought on her arm the new dress she had been making, according to agreement, for Sylvia. The two girls went up stairs, laughing and chatting in true girl fashion.

"This is my poem," said Laura, "and I have taken solid comfort in making it. Have you finished yours?"

"Almost, all but a little copying. It was just splendid of you to make my dress. I wish I could do something for you."

"You can, fairy princess. Just put this gown right on, and let me see if it is all right."

"There!" she continued when Sylvia was duly enrobed, "you look just like an angel in a sunset cloud, that is, as near as I can imagine an angel, and I think I must be not far from right. Mark will agree with me, I know. There, Aunt Ruth must be satisfied with that."

A shadow had flitted over Sylvia's merry face at the mention of Mark.

A reaction had followed the intense happiness of that morning, more than two months ago, when she had received Mark's gift. She could not forget the sadness of her mother's smile when she

said: "Thee will never forget him, I see."

Between the lines of her poem she heard, as she wrote, the sad, regretful voice. The dew on her flowers recalled the tears that often rose to her mother's eyes; and the passage to which her Discipline fell open—by what she dare not call chance, yet shrank from calling providence—weighed heavily on her mind.

All these things came back to her at Laura's mention of Mark. She made haste to change the subject:

"How is Aunt Patience?" she asked.

"Better, only——"

"Only what?"

"Don't feel badly, little woman, mother is under one of her 'impressions,' and it is about you. She says that it is borne in upon her that trouble is coming to Sylvia. But it is only because she is not quite well yet, and she always thinks a great deal about you. I can't believe that the Lord will let trouble come to you now."

"Aunt Patience has the gift of prophecy," exclaimed Sylvia, with dismay and awe in her tone. "I have noticed over and over that her impressions came true. O Laura! I am not ready for trouble. I do so like to be comfortable and happy. I am not the least bit of a heroine."

"Of course you like to be happy, who doesn't? And, of course, you're going to be happy. Don't you have a single blue. Mother's prophecies will be all right as soon as she feels better and can get out into the fresh air. Now I must go; I promised mother I'd read to her this evening."

The two girls went down, and the new dress received the unspoken admiration of the twins. Ruth said:

"Thee was very good to sew for Sylvia; I hope she will do as much for thee sometime."

"I liked to do it," replied Laura. "Isn't she just lovely in it?"

"All are lovely who have a 'meek and quiet spirit,'" replied her aunt, and Laura did not further press the ques-

tion. She bade her aunt and the twins farewell, and went out with Sylvia, who accompanied her to the gate.

The sun was still half an hour high, and Sylvia went back to her room to take advantage of the daylight to finish the copying of her poem and to read it aloud, her only visible auditor being her pet cat, Othello, who purred unqualified approval, as the gentle voice read on.

"There, Othello, now it is all done, and I know every word of it," said she, as she laid the manuscript carefully into her desk. Othello sat on a little stand, his fore-paws firmly pressed upon Mark's last letter. The sun stood just above the horizon, and Sylvia sat down by the west window and fell into a reverie, and took no note of Othello's movements, when he jumped from the table and hid himself under the eaves. The girl was looking at the seminary windows, lighted up by the brilliant sunset-colors; and she was thinking over her school-days, all associated with Mark.

The two had been friends from babyhood. When Mark was five years old he had sat beside Ruth Trueheart, and Baby Sylvia had been placed in his lap. He had held her with wonder and delight shining in his brown eyes, and had asked Faith how to put her down, when at length he felt his tired little arms aching under the weight of the chubby cherub, and Mother Trueheart had made haste to catch the baby and save a fall. Poor mother; she was trying to do the like now, but Mark no longer wished to give up the girl whom, ever since that far-off day, he had considered as in some way belonging to him.

On many a First-day the tedium of the silent meeting had been rendered less irksome to the restless boy by the sight of the bright face of Sylvia, who sat opposite him. They had been to the district school and seminary together. Mark had helped the little maiden "do sums," and parse, and construe Dido's plaintive story; together they had botanized and tried chemical experiments and planned picnics.

When separated they had always written to each other, without any thought of romance, until lately. At last they had both waked up to realize that life could not always go on in the old way, and it must soon be decided whether it should be one life or two for them.

Since Mark's sudden departure he had written often to Sylvia urging a betrothal, but her letters, though frequent and friendly, gave him no certain promise on the subject always deepest in his heart. She would wait till he came home, she said to herself; he must trust her until the way was clearer to her. He would surely come to the reunion, if it were possible, and he should see that she wore his gift. Certain lines of her poem had been written with especial thought of him, and she felt sure he would claim them.

The time was now very near; for the morrow would be the long-looked-for day of the reunion.

It was growing dark now in this room where the day was longest, and Sylvia turned from the window and called Othello to go down stairs with her; but crafty Othello did not deem it wise to answer every call; he winked a pair of emerald eyes, down under the eaves, but not a mew nor a purr spake he.

"I guess he has gone," said Sylvia; and naughty Othello winked again.

"Sylvia," called her mother's voice, "here's some one thee will be glad to see."

Sylvia always remembered that evening as one remembers a beautiful and happy dream, such as is often followed by perplexity and sorrow. From the time when she finished her recitation to the rapturously purring Othello to the moment when she put her watch carefully between her feather bed and husk mattress, and closed her eyes for the night, the exultant little Quaker's heart danced as never danced the daffodils. Was she not rightfully as happy over her finished poem as Browning could ever have been over one of his? Let the heart of any youthful lyrist make answer. Then besides, she said to herself, over and over, that only a few hours, and those mostly of

sleep, hovered between her and the sight of George's face.

Moreover, the guest of the evening had been a most welcome one, her mother's only and twin brother, Paul Vance, who had lately returned from Europe, after an absence of ten years. Sylvia well remembered the day he went away with his beautiful wife and their little son Philip, one year older than Sylvia herself.

They had come from their home in New Bedford for a farewell visit to Ruth Trueheart and family. Sylvia had wondered then over the strange likeness and unlikeness between the Madonna-like face of her mother and the merry, brilliant face of her uncle. Now as they stood together again, with gleams of silver in both heads, the same wonder came to her again. She heard that as children they had looked exactly alike. How differently life must have dealt with them, to bring about the tantalizing unlikeness. She could not help wishing that her mother's sad eyes, so like her brother's in color, could have the happy look that shone from his. She felt sure that his beard concealed as mobile lips and as dimpled a chin as her mother owned; and his way of speaking had a delightfully homelike ring. His stories of lands that he had visited, and of people and of works of art that he had seen, woke in her a longing to see the great wonderful world. She remembered that Mark had often expressed the same longing.

"Perhaps,"—she said, as she closed her eyes that night; and then she tried to turn her thoughts to such subjects as her mother had taught her were most fitting when giving herself up to sleep, "the image of death."

A more beautiful day than the one that woke her nine hours later never rose over Stillbrook. It was a very bright face that smiled back at Sylvia, as she stood combing her hair, curling in obstinately un-Quakerlike ringlets, before her small, old-fashioned mirror. The twins, down stairs, smiled, too, as they heard her singing a stanza of a quaint, old-fashioned hymn:

"Oh, like the sun, may I fulfill
The appointed duties of the day:
With ready mind and active will,
March on and keep my heavenly way."

"We'll excuse the poet of the day
from housework this morning," said
her mother, as Sylvia appeared in the
living room a few minutes later.

"I don't want to be excused, little
Mother," answered Sylvia, kissing her
and putting on a large apron. "I'll
make some muffins; I'm quite muffin
hungry."

She was briskly stirring her batter,
when a ring of the front door bell
brought the housework to a sudden
standstill. It was an unusual sound;
for Stillbrook neighbors almost always
came to the piazza door.

"Thee had better go, Faith; thee
looks tidiest," said the mother.

"I'll go," said Sylvia; "Probably
it's one of the committee."

She soon came back with her tall
cousin, Philip Vance, who insisted up-
on going into the living room where
his aunt was working. He accepted,
with boyish eagerness, an invitation to
breakfast, and urged Sylvia to go on
with her work. He sat and watched
her curiously, trying to imagine her
"making her debut" into fashionable
society.

"How delightful it is here!" he
exclaimed, after looking around him-
self with a pair of splendid brown
eyes. "I'm so tired of hotels! This
room looks exactly as it did before we
went abroad. Say, Sylvia! didn't we
have fun, playing horse-cars with these
chairs? and now,—Oh! I forgot!
Mother sent you a bracelet; she wants
you to wear it to-day, and to keep it to
remember her by. She wanted me to
tell you that she was very sorry she
couldn't be at the celebration, and she
hopes you will come and read your
poem to her, before we go back to
New Bedford. She never leaves Avis,
and of course she would not take her
to a literary entertainment."

He had taken a little box from one
of his pockets while talking; and, from
the box, a bracelet of flexible gold.
Coming forward, he dropped on one

knee beside Sylvia, whose eyes were
shining with girlish delight, but whose
prudent hands were just placing the
iron-clad, well furnished with muffins,
into the oven.

"One moment, please!" he said, as
she closed the oven door; and he
quickly clasped the bracelet on her
arm. Just then the door opened, with-
out warning knock, and Sylvia and
Philip rose, with smiling and blushing
faces, and stood for an instant side by
side, gazing at the new comer. Then
Sylvia came forward, saying in her cor-
dial way:

"Good morning, Thankful. You
want your milk, I suppose. Ted is
just bringing it in. Mr. Vance, this is
Miss Smith, one of our neighbors."

Thankful Smith's face flushed with
pleasure at the introduction, and she
chatted incessantly with Philip, until
the milk was strained and her pail
filled, much to that youth's amusement.
When she could make no excuse for
staying longer, she turned to go with
evident reluctance, but with a happy
giggle. Sylvia stood looking down the
road as Thankful passed along. She
swung her pail as she went out of the
gate and giggled again, and went on
humming "The girl I left behind me."
Sylvia could hardly have explained why
she felt indignant, but she did.

As for Thankful, she turned into
Vine street, and met, face to face,
Mark Strong, who, grip in hand, was
walking rapidly. Then did an evil
spirit take possession of the girl's
tongue.

"Why, how d'ye do?" she began,
shifting her pail to her left hand, and
extending her right to shake hands
with Mark, who had nearly passed her.
"I hope you don't feel too grand to
speak to common folks."

Mark unwillingly stopped and took
the proffered hand.

"You're an awful stranger," she
continued, "I haven't seen you for an
age. Didn't hardly know you. You
won't hardly know Stillbrook folks
neither, I guess. Seems as if the
world was turning up sides down or
something, things come to pass so

sudden lately. 'The Baptis' minister fell down dead last week, and Jim Jones has got the scarlet fever, and Sylvy's got a beau, a reg'lar stunner, a furriner, I guess. He aint no country gawk, now I tell you. Great blazin' eyes, an' a mistache a comin', an' dressed to kill. You'll see him to the reunion; he'll be sure to be there. I see him down to her house this mornin'. He give her a bracelet that was wuth fifty dollars, if 'twas a cent. Well, there, I won't keep yuh standin' here. Goodbye; oh! say, come over an' see us, fur pity's sake. Marm'll be awful glad to see yuh."

She hurried away, and Mark went on like one in a horrid dream. He crossed the little bridge over which he had walked to school with Sylvia hundreds of times. Just beyond he met a young stranger. Thankful's description had been sufficiently accurate; Mark could not doubt who it was. On the lapel of his coat was a tiny bouquet, just such a one as Sylvia had often made for himself,—in some other life, it seemed to him. He walked slowly till Philip had passed out of sight; then turned into a road that led through some woods in the open country.

Sylvia, from her open attic window, saw him turn the corner, and her heart sank with heavy forebodings.

"Don't stop to make thy bed this morning," called Patience; "it's time to dress for the reunion."

"All right," answered Sylvia, wondering how a cheerful voice could sound from one so utterly sad as she was now. She dressed quickly, and, lifting the feather bed, looked for her watch. It was gone! She took off bed and mattress; no watch was to be seen. What could it mean? A strange fear seized her. She trembled as she thought of Aunt Patience's "impression." She remembered giving Ted permission to go to her room for a book. Could the boy have been tempted? She could hear him whistling, at his work; but there was no time to question him, nor did she feel strong enough to do it. She fastened some forget-me-nots to her waist and went

down stairs. No remark was made about the absence of the watch; but she saw a look of relief and thankfulness in her mother's eyes.

It was well that Sylvia had committed the poem to memory. She held her manuscript before almost unseeing eyes. Yet she recited every word in a clear voice; and there were smiles and tears on many faces before her. She saw but one face of them all—the face of Mark Strong; and on it was neither smile nor tear; it was like a dead face. Only once a flush passed over it, as Sylvia turned slightly so that the sunlight fell, for a moment, full on the forget-me-nots and on the bracelets; but he saw no gleam of the chain that he had given her.

The music of the speaker's voice ceased. Mark heard the applause of the audience, and saw Philip hand Sylvia a basket of flowers; then he turned and went away. By the time that Sylvia could escape from her congratulating friends, Mark was miles away from Stillbrook.

v.

"It beat all, what's come over Sylvy; she aint the same gal at all sence the day she read the po'try down to the seminary. Wa'n't that a splendid piece, though! Good enough to print, I think. 'Tought to 'a' ben printed in the *Stillbrook Star*. But you couldn't get that sweet voice of hern into no print, nor her face, neither. She looked as pooty as a picter in that pink gownd. But it jest made some of them Quakers shiver. I see Friend Hall shut his eyes and kind of shudder all over. But 'tain't no use. Gals has to dress pooty, same's robins an' jays do. As fur me, I allus feel like sayin' of a little prayer when I see Sylvy; she reminds me of angels an' all them pious things. Mebbe it's wicked, but it's so, true's preachin'—truer'n some preachin' I've hearn in my day. There she goes now!"

The little group in the shoemaker's kitchen looked out of the window to see Sylvia Trueheart, clad in Quaker

gray, and looking sad and preoccupied, passing down the street, across the bridge, and, a few steps beyond, going through a small garden, and up the steps of a brown cottage.

"I wonder she ain't to the meeting," said the shoemaker's wife, as she tied Baby Zilpah's shoe. "I thought she was as reg'lar as a clock to Fifthday meetin', as they call it."

"She's gone to Patience Steven's; that's jest as good, I guess," answered Uncle Reuben.

Meanwhile, Sylvia had entered Aunt Patience's kitchen. The floor, painted blue, with dabs of black, was a voiceless admonition to in-comers to look to their feet. Four chairs were placed with geometrical exactness, one at the middle of each side of the room. A fifth, an old-fashioned, high-backed rocker, was drawn up beside a table on which was a Bible, the Letters of George Fox, a pair of spectacles, a knitting-work, and a cheerfully purring cat.

In the rocker sat Aunt Patience, her hands folded on her lap, her eyes closed, and the look of a rapt and expectant saint on her face. Sylvia knew she was keeping silent meeting, while other friends were worshipping at the meeting-house. She quietly placed a chair for herself beside that of the aged woman, seated herself, clasped her hands, and joined in the silent worship.

A few moments passed without spoken words. Then Patience Stevens opened her eyes and fixed them upon the girl by her side. In a solemn, singing tone she began to speak:

"The hand of the Lord is upon thee, child. It is He who has sent thee to hear His word at my mouth. I know not what sorrow is in your heart; but it is borne in upon me that the first joy of thy youth is overclouded, and that thou hast come hither 'grieved in spirit.' Sorrow and temptation and new duties await thee. Listen, child! 'Truly the Lord is in this place.' Fear not where He is. Love only his will; ask for thine own true work and do it. If He has given

thee a gift, it is thy duty and thy blessedness to occupy that gift. Thy life, thy true life, depends upon thy faithfulness; and thou canst be faithful only when thou livest 'as seeing Him who is invisible.' For this thou wast born into the world, that, like thy Lord thou shouldst find thy life in doing the will of the Father. If thy will has been crossed it is because following it would have darkened for thee the light of life. The will of God is the only good that thou canst ever find."

There was silence again in the old kitchen until the long clock in the corner struck twelve. Then Patience turned with a smile toward Sylvia and held out her hand. Tears glistened in the girl's eyes, but there was a look of peace behind the tears. She took the faithful hand, said "Farewell," and left the cottage without another word. The world seemed to have put on a new glory and beauty. The rows of zinnias along the garden path lifted bright little crowns to cheer her; the pansies smiled at her with their queer, beautiful faces, and the marigolds shone like little suns. Outside, the dear old elms bent over her with glad, mysterious whispers; and, over and over, she said to herself: "Ask for thy own true work and do it! I will! I will!"

She had not gone far when she met her uncle. He did not recognize her before she had time to note a sad and preoccupied look on his face. It vanished at once when she bowed, and face and voice were as merry as a boy's as he said:

"Come round to the tavern, I want your aunt to have as much of your company as may be while she is here. I wish she could have a girl like you with her all the time."

As they drew near the "Stillbrook Rest," a child came running toward them, making rapid motions with her fingers. The child was laughing, but Sylvia noted the look of sorrow again, now mingled with one of great tenderness, on her uncle's face.

"I suppose you know that Avis is deaf and dumb?" said he.

"No," answered Sylvia; "she was out playing when I was here before, and Auntie did not mention it. I am so sorry! But she and I will be famous friends; I know how to talk to her. I have several deaf and dumb friends."

Sylvia was warmly welcomed by her aunt. Avis stood by the side of her cousin, looking inquiringly into her beautiful face.

"Can she understand the motion of the lips?" asked Sylvia.

"Not very well," said her mother with a sigh. "I have tried and tried to teach her; but I don't know how. Do you know how to teach the deaf to articulate?"

"Yes," answered Sylvia. "I learned from a teacher in a school for deaf mutes. I have succeeded in teaching one little boy so that he talks very well."

Mrs. Vance rose, pale with excitement, and came to Sylvia, who had taken Avis on her lap:

"Sylvia Trueheart!" she exclaimed, "I believe the Lord sent you to me. You are just the one for whom I have been longing and praying. If you will travel with us four years and teach Avis, you shall be like a daughter to me; and we will pay you whatever you ask. Will you? Oh! do say yes."

The roses burst into sudden bloom on Sylvia's pale cheeks. She could hardly speak for surprise and delight. She had been longing to go away from Stillbrook, and to rest from curious eyes. Could it be that she had already found "her own true work?"

"Will you, Sylvia?" repeated Mrs. Vance, eagerly.

"Of course she will," said Uncle Paul.

"I'd like it above all things," answered Sylvia, at length; "but I don't know how my mother and sisters will feel about it."

"Oh! they must let you go!" exclaimed the mother. "I can't let Avis go to an institution; and I must have you."

"Well, I'll talk with them about it," said Sylvia, laughing.

That evening there was a council at

the Trueheart cottage. Ruth Trueheart and her daughters, Aunt Patience, Uncle Paul and little Avis were present and took part in the deliberations.

"You see," said Uncle Paul, "besides being an unspeakable good to Avis, it will be a great advantage to Sylvia; for she shall learn languages and art, and whatever else she wishes to study. I think we can make up to her for having missed college."

"We don't want to be selfish," said her mother, "but it will hardly seem like home without Sylvia."

"Most mothers have to give up their daughters in one way or another," remarked Uncle Paul.

The color rushed to Ruth's face. Her thankfulness that she had not been asked to give Sylvia to Mark made it easier, surely, to think of parting from her a few years.

"Sylvia, dost thou feel that thou wilt go at the Divine call, and not merely for worldly gain?" asked Aunt Patience.

"I do, Auntie, or I would not go."

"To loose the tongue of the dumb is surely to do one of the Lord's own works," said Faith.

"That's so," assented Patience; "but oh! I'm afraid we'll be dumb ourselves if Sylvia goes; she's been the life of the house ever since she was born. However, I won't be the one to put an obstacle in her way, if she wishes to go."

Just then, Avis, looking at her father, began to form words quickly with her fingers. Sylvia, who understood her, laughed.

"What does she say?" asked Patience.

"She says," answered Uncle Paul, "that she will take care of Cousin Sylvia, and that she herself will be a Friend, and have silent meetings with Sylvia. She has understood from her mother that you might not like to have her away with 'world's people.'"

"We shall all pray that she be kept 'unspotted from the world,' wherever she may be," said the mother.

"The golden rule seems to favor her going," she continued, trying to smile.

"If Avis were mine, and Sylvia thine, I should want Sylvia. Thee may go, child, it is the Lord's leading."

VI.

"Bet yuh don't know who's a-goin' to be married!"

Joe Crisp, Uucle Reuben's eldest son, stood leaning against the door of his father's shop. He looked like another Uncle Reuben with the wrinkles rubbed out, the hair darkened, and the color of the cheeks a little deepened. His cap was thrust back from his forehead, and his eyes were shining with the consciousness of an opportunity to astonish his father.

"We don't bet here, sonny," said the old shoemaker, laying down one shoe and taking up another; "I don't want no boy of mine growin' up a bettin' character. You wait a minute; I want to send these boots over to the doctor's. Who is a-goin' to be married?" he asked, after waiting two full minutes, in hope that his wife would come in. For he deemed it the part of women to show interest in such matters. But time was passing, and Mrs. Crisp had not appeared.

"Guess just once, pop."

"Oh, Thankful Smith."

"Thankful Smith!" repeated the boy, with more than a hint of contempt in his voice. "She'll never be married. I'd pity the kid that was tied to her, if she did."

"Sho, Joe; Thankful aint the wust chice a man might make; but who is it?"

"Guess jest once more."

"Well, Laury Stevens, mebbe."

"No; she won't never get married, nuther. She knows too much."

"Well then, who is it?"

"Aunt Ruth Trueheart."

"There, Joie, don't joke about such things."

"I aint a-jokin'. It's so."

"It's one of the girls."

"No, sir; it's Aunt Ruth. I heard um tellin' all about it down to the store. She's a-goin' to have an old chap that wanted her when she was

young. She wanted him too, but he wasn't a Quaker, and he was some kind of a music-feller, and she thought it was wicked to have him, so she didn't. The old feller's waited for her, and didn't never marry nobody, only lived with his sister; an' what did he do last week but come down to Stillbrook and pop the question to her again. And she was just home from yearly meetin'. They had a great time down to yearly meetin', an' finally they said folks could marry out of meetin' if they wanted to. So Aunt Ruth is all right, for she thinks the yearly meetin' knows; so they're goin' to be married next month."

"I want to know!" exclaimed Uncle Reuben. "Well, I never! Here, take the shoes. Why, here's the doctor now. How d'ye do, doctor?"

"Do splendidly," answered the doctor heartily. "Shoes ready? Those are first class."

"I done um 'heartily as unto the Lord,' as the Scripture tells us to," answered the gratified shoemaker. "How's your bizness?"

"Better than is good for the people; there's a great deal of sickness just now. Mark Strong has come home to his mother completely run down. I shall try to induce him to go abroad for a while. I understand he has an Italian friend who is going home, and will be delighted to look out for him, and see him comfortably located when he gets there."

"How long's Sylvy been gone?" asked Uncle Reuben, with only seeming irrelevancy, as his wife came in from market.

"Most four years; it don't seem hardly possible, though. But the way I know is by little Isr'el there. He was a baby when Sylvy went away; and see what a noble, great boy he is now!"

Mrs. Crisp seized her youngest son, who had followed her in, and, with a mother's skill, finding a cleanish place, she deftly deposited a kiss thereon.

"She'll be home in three or four months, I guess," she went on.

"I think you're about right about

Mark, Doctor," said Uncle Reuben, "better send him right on."

The doctor, who had settled in the place since Sylvia had left home, looked a little mystified, but simply said:

"I shall do my best to have him go; he's a fine fellow; we can't spare him to the angels yet."

"No," said Uncle Reuben, after the doctor had shut the door; "leastways, not to but one angel,—an' that, one that we're pooty well acquainted with."

The first sharp, cold breezes had begun to blow over the Stillbrook hills, warning of the coming of winter, when Sylvia Trueheart reached her old home again.

She had secretly dreaded meeting her mother's husband; but one look at his strong, noble, patient face changed the dread to reverence and love.

"Home is perfect now," she said to herself; but her heart raised a question, which she tried in vain not to hear.

Sitting in the dear old living-room, she told them all of her success with little Avis, who could now talk, and whose voice was now counted the sweetest music in Uncle Vance's home; of her own studies and of many wonderful and beautiful things she had enjoyed.

Afterwards, in her own little room, she told her mother, whose eyes now wore as happy a look as Uncle Philip's, how hard she had tried to forget Mark save as an old friend and schoolmate, and to devote herself to her work.

"Thee couldn't, daughter; I knew thee couldn't," answered her mother, with cheeks as pink as June roses.

"No, mother, I couldn't forget him; and he found me one day, after he had been several weeks only a short distance from the hotel where we were. For more than three years he believed that I was engaged to Philip; and it was not till he saw Philip's marriage in an Italian paper that he came to me. He wanted me to promise to be his wife; but I would give no promise without thy consent, mother."

"Follow the Light. It hath led

thee safely, my daughter," said her mother, looking fondly into the wistful eyes of the girl. "I have made too many blunders to presume to dictate to thee. I have learned that the Lord has much iniquity to pardon in what we have counted as our holy things."

"Thank thee, mother dear," said Sylvia; and the two sat silent for a little space.

"When will Mark come home?" asked Ruth at length.

"In the spring, he hopes. His physician would not consent to his coming sooner."

"Well, he shall be welcome."

"Mother, has thee ever found my watch?" asked Sylvia.

"No, dear, not a trace of it. Thy room, thee sees, is just as thee left it. No one has done any work here, but myself; and I have always put everything back that I have moved when I swept or dusted. Next week we will have it thoroughly cleaned."

And so it came to pass, not many days after that Ted carried the husk mattress out to a grassy place behind the cottage, and emptied said mattress there, Sylvia herself and Othello being witnesses. As the husks fell in an increasing pile, and the September breeze played with them, Othello's sharp eyes watched with much excitement. At length he gave a spring and struck with his paw something bright. Ted seized it; it was the long-lost watch.

In an instant the mystery cleared itself in Sylvia's mind. She remembered how active that same black paw had been in days past; how often she had gently pushed it from her moving pen; how Othello had liked to burrow under pillows, and that he had failed to respond that evening before the reunion, when she had called him to go down stairs.

"Thou little rascal," she exclaimed. "So it was thee!"

Othello purred contentedly, seeming to take her words as praise. Ted, who had never been allowed to know that he rested under suspicion, and who had been wholly unconscious of the

careful watch that had been kept over him, rejoiced almost as much as Sylvia over the finding of the lost treasure.

The winter passed happily in the cottage. Spring brought Mark back with health renewed and hope alive for the years to come.

In April, at the Stillbrook monthly meeting, the announcement was made that "with Divine permission and Friends' approbation, Mark Strong and Sylvia Trueheart intended marriage with each other."

John Jones and Samuel Estes from the men's meeting and Patience Stevens and Rachel Bennett from the women's meeting, were appointed "to make the necessary inquiries respecting the clearness to proceed in marriage."

This "clearness" having been established, and all other Friendly preparations having been duly observed and made, an unusually large assembly was gathered at the June monthly meeting, including many brightly dressed worldlings, who gazed with much interest at Mark Strong, and his Quaker bride, the latter dressed in silver gray silk, as they walked up the aisle to the "elders' seats." A long and solemn silence followed. At length Mark and Sylvia rose in the presence of the con-

gregation, and Mark pronounced his marriage vows:

"In the presence of the Lord, and before this assembly, I take thee, Sylvia Trueheart, to be my wife; promising, with Divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful husband until death shall separate us."

And Sylvia, her eyes fixed on Mark's face, responded in a clear voice, that reached every corner of the old meeting-house, and brought happy tears to many eyes:

"In the presence of the Lord, and before this assembly, I take thee, Mark Strong, to be my husband, promising, with Divine assistance, to be a faithful and loving wife, until death shall separate us."

"It beats all," said Uncle Reuben Crisp, in his favorite phraseology, "how complete those Quakers marry themselves, without no help from a parson. Well, I'm glad for Mark, an' I hope Sylvy won't have no cause to repent. She's a good gal, an' she's kep' right on in the way of dooty. an' the Lord hez kep' his promise an' led her all the way, an' giv' her the desire of her heart. I'm goin' to sign that there certificate, just fur the pleasure of seein' her name writ Sylvy Trueheart Strong."

Elizabeth Converse.

THE BITER BIT.

Lyon, G A

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THE BITER BIT.

THERE was a large crowd on the steamer, unusually large for the time of year that Mr. Robert Berrien chose for his trip to Europe. He disliked crowds, and it was for that reason that he had fallen into the habit of making his annual journey across the Atlantic in the pursuit of his business interests, in the Autumn. Hence the presence of an extra heavy number of passengers on this particular trip was very much to his distaste.

He was of a queer sort; a companionable man, who liked humanity in the abstract, drawing from it a good deal of enjoyment as well as material

for his work, but there were times when he preferred total solitude to company, even of that sort that haunts trans-oceanic steamers, that can be cultivated or let alone, just as one may please. None of Mr. Berrien's friends had ever been able to obtain from him any explanation of this rather contradictory trait, and hence it must be left to inference, and set down as a reasonable theory, that he did not like a society which, if it be cultivated at all, is an inevitability for the entire trip, not to be snubbed or shaken off without much personal discomfort.

Mr. Berrien did not like discomfort

of any sort. He always chose the shady places in summer, and the warm corners in winter. He liked the seat near the door at table, and when he went to the theatre, which was often, as that was altogether in his line, he was careful to select a seat in the exact middle of a row, so as not to be disturbed by late comers, or by men who went out between acts. Thus, when he purchased his yearly steamer ticket, he took particular pains to find a vessel that promised plenty of space, for, above all things, he did not like to touch elbows when elbow-room was at a premium.

The rush to this steamer had come after he had secured his passage, and he knew nothing of it until he went on board on sailing day, and then he was near to losing his temper. It provoked him to an unusual degree, and he was in a bad humor for the first three days of the voyage. It did not help matters in the least when the explanation reached his ears that the folks on board were mostly delegates to a religious convention of some sort on the other side, for that, according to his notion, meant a dull monotony of characteristics, an unbroken expanse of fanatic humanity, as he expressed it, that would neither furnish material nor afford amusement. But at the end of the third day his fit of ill-temper had worked itself off, and after that his inherent good-nature, aided by certain extraneous circumstances that form the sole motive and apology for this narration, reasserted itself, and he smiled again.

It should be explained at this point that Mr. Berrien wrote plays for a living. He wrote farces and comedies, mostly, for he found there was more of a market for plays that made folks laugh than for any others. He had produced a good many plays during his career, but they had not all been performed, and he was gradually accumulating a stock of material which, he reassuringly told himself in his despondent moments, would form a comfortable nest-egg should he ever become a drug on the market. Just what he pro-

posed to do with this stock he never attempted to explain to himself, but he had a vague notion that he could dispose of it to a lower grade of managers than those with whom he now dealt, and thus turn it into funds.

This was his annual trip to Europe in search of material, which he usually found in the theatres of London, Paris, and Berlin. Sometimes he adapted successful performances to suit the tastes of American eyes and ears, sometimes he borrowed ideas that struck him as being the reasons for popular favor, again he combined two or three plays into one, but more often he simply put together a lot of characters he had encountered in real life, utilizing some standard plot of his own as a pretext for exhibiting them.

Berrien's native cleverness, coupled with a keen sense of what the average man wants to see and hear on the stage, enabled him to turn out a number of most acceptable plays, and he had achieved quite a reputation at home, which was beginning to be whispered abroad. He was therefore reasonably well provided with the means of life and ease, and the day seemed afar off when he should have to turn his old stock into money at reduced rates.

Meanwhile the steamer has gone on in its course, carrying Mr. Berrien and his unwelcome companions well out on their way across. Three days passed, and Berrien at last reached that state of mind in which a prisoner sees the folly of rebellion, and accepts his fate with resignation. It must not be taken by this use of the word that Berrien saw his Fate—in that odd significance that the term has come to have—on board, for by this time he had had so many genuine love affairs, or rather incidents that had passed for such, that he no longer considered such matters with serious apprehensions of results. He had simply begun to realize that, hidden away among the religious delegates, and behind them, there might possibly be some material on board. One could never tell. It was like aluminum, present in every bank of

common clay, or it was like gold, found only in widely separated spots. It was altogether an uncertain quantity, and it was due to Berrien's bad humor that he had not thought of this earlier in the voyage.

When he did think of it, however, he was forced to smile as he recalled a certain trip he had taken some years before—the first time he had crossed the ocean—when he found what he considered a first-class character for reproduction on the stage, but before he had concluded his microscopical examination of it—it would perhaps be more polite to use the proper pronoun, of her—then, he had proposed and had been rejected. But that was in the days before Berrien had given over serious love-making, and since then he had been mortally shy of wooing on board steamers. There was altogether too much uncertainty about it. The young women seemed to give themselves up to romance too utterly for safe approaches, and a man's best policy, he told himself, was to let them entirely alone.

Yet he was provokingly startled by a face he encountered on deck one morning, and he let himself watch it for some time. It was young, and yet it was not so young. It had all the softness of youth, and all the lines of wisdom and experience. It might have been the face of a young widow, or a school-teacher who had not yet lost the bloom of her girlhood. It was thoughtful, and yet it sparkled with fun. It could face the entire deck, and yet blush occasionally, and altogether it presented such remarkable contrasts that Mr. Berrien's attention was irresistibly attracted. That the owner was not a widow, or at least that she had not been recently bereaved, was attested by the coloring of her costume, which was never loud, but always tastefully delicate. At times she walked with an elderly woman, who appeared to be somewhat feeble. There was no resemblance between them, and the elder woman might be either an aunt or a chance chaperone. There was no telling. In fact, there was no

telling about anyone on board, for there was such a crowd that one could not apply the rules of analysis in the least.

Berrien tried to resolve the problem into a logical statement that night in his bunk, but in the morning it remained a problem, and he determined to prosecute his profession and push his search for material by obtaining some information about the young woman. He was rather surprised to see her on deck as he walked out, and he began to study for a way to make her acquaintance. It was not long before such a chance presented itself, and, old traveller that he was, he accepted it as though it were the most natural and casual thing in the world. Indeed, it was natural for a gentleman to rescue the handkerchief of a young woman sitting alone on the heaving deck of a steamer that is ramming its nose in a gale. It was rather difficult to get to the bit of white cloth, that had blown well up the deck, without losing balance, but it was finally secured and returned to the owner, with a word of comment on the storm, that afforded a perfectly proper opportunity for further remarks upon the prospect of the weather, and the giving of a bit of information about the slower progress of the steamer that Berrien had gleaned at the table that morning. There was nothing unnatural or ungentlemanly or unladylike in the matter. There were no qualms of conscience on the part of either. It was an every-day happening, on board a steamer, and neither Berrien nor the young woman felt at all guilty when, an hour later, the storm having increased so that sitting on the deck was uncomfortable, they descended to the main saloon and there continued their conversation, talking like old friends.

Berrien was used to this sort of thing. The girl liked the novelty of it. They discovered that they had mutual friends, they had congenial tastes, and as yet they had found nothing in each other to which they could in the least object. Everything was perfectly pleasant, and by the time for the second meal of the

day, they acted and almost felt as if they had known each other for a long time, longer indeed than one short morning.

In the afternoon they ventured on deck again, and were treated to a magnificent display of hydraulics. The storm had increased until the steamer had been obliged to go out of her course a few points in order to make any sort of headway. She was going at about half her rate, and the prospect of reaching port on time was quite annihilated. This was realized by no one on board with more real pleasure than Berrien and his new-found friend. They mentioned it to each other in a half suggestive way that made her blush, while he smiled and bit his lips. They had exchanged cards and he had learned her name, Ellen Spaulding. It sounded familiar to him, but he could not locate it. She had heard of him in a vague way that he did not try to aid.

She was taking her aunt—so it was her aunt, after all, and he felt easier about her—over to try the effect of the German Springs on her very much shattered constitution. She was well enough herself, but she was going to turn her trip into profit by taking a course of something or other at one of the Universities. No, indeed, she had never taught school. What had given that impression?

There is less mystery, generally speaking, about a man's traveling, than about a woman. Hence there was less questioning, and correspondingly less answering, in regard to Berrien's business and errand. A man can go and come unchallenged, for that is what he lives for, but when a woman, particularly a young one, leaves the hearthstone and crosses the ocean, she becomes legitimate prey to the curiosity of others, and she does not seem to resent it. It is one of the penalties of her sex.

The Aunt did not appear all day, but Ellen went to see her often enough to show a deep interest in her condition. She spent the entire evening with her, in their box of a room, and thus did penance for her desertion in the hours

of light. She told her all about her new friend, but not with the air of a confession, for there were such relations between them that the younger woman had the utmost freedom, and the Aunt the greatest confidence. And neither was misused. It was a delightful combination, so Ellen told Berrien the next day.

In the morning the storm was worse than ever and the ship was going very slowly. There was a rumor abroad that something had happened to one of the engines, but no one knew anything authoritatively. Berrien finally investigated the report—he seldom cared enough about such things to trouble himself—and found that there was a hot bearing on the port shaft, and that there was no prospect of cooling it permanently until land was reached. There was no danger so long as the starboard engine held out, so the ship's head could be held to the wind, and no one seemed to fear the consequences, beyond a delay of two or possibly three days.

The young man was concerned afterwards to find that he had heard this announcement with a certain amount of pleasure, and he was still more troubled when he saw the young woman's face light up in welcome of the news when he told her. He presented a queer aspect of both joy and pain. He was having a jolly time, talking to one of the brightest women he had ever met, but he feared the results of any prolongation of the trip, which would have been over in two more days if nothing had happened. He did not state the possibilities to himself with any degree of definiteness, but he was conscious of an uncomfortable sensation within him that lasted at least an hour after his trip to the engine room.

What worried Berrien more than anything else was the fact that his study of the character of Ellen Spaulding had come to an abrupt end. He had thought that he knew her perfectly, and yet he was not wholly satisfied. There was a feeling that beyond the information she had let him glean of her character, and mind, and mode of life, and methods of

thought, she had had from him a great store of intelligence. He was not at all sure of it. He did not know whether this included her experiences, or intentions, or impressions, or what not, but at any rate he felt baffled. His analysis was blocked, and he had no agent at hand to pursue his investigation. He did not realize then, as he did later on, that the fault lay in his change of attitude, and that he could no longer hope to study her scientifically, as he had started out to do.

To his credit, however, it must be said that there were no demonstrations on his part. He possessed a good deal of what is known as chivalric honor, or at least what used to pass for such in former days, and he felt keenly the injustice of making any sentimental speeches or suggestive remarks for the sole purpose of catching her off her guard. He was sadly worried, too, over her attitude towards him. From the beginning it had been inspired by the greatest apparent cordiality and friendship. She had seemed to recognize in him a congenial spirit, and had given herself totally over to a companionship with it. There were hints now and then, in her words, of sentiment, but they were always quickly followed by moments of sober common-places, and she had appeared to strive to retain possession of her principles of propriety. She was more of a puzzle to him than he cared to admit, and with it all she had so deftly handled their conversations that he had done most of the talking. He did not realize until after they had left the steamer that she had been drawing him out quite as fully as he had probed her.

The Aunt had returned to the view of the little world on board on the third day of the storm, and smiled to find Mr. Berrien such a presentable individual. She afterwards went so far as to commend Ellen for her accurate description of him, and that was a good deal for Mrs. Wheeler to do on any occasion.

The ship was at last making her way into port, and there were preparations for landing on every hand. Berrien

travelled so lightly, having reduced the matter of baggage to an exact science, that he was among the first to show himself on deck on the morning of the glorious Autumn day, on which it was expected the ship would reach the French port for which she was bound. He had little idea of making any set speeches to either Miss Spaulding or her aunt, but he was determined to say good-bye in as pleasantly unconscious a style as his rather perturbed spirit would let him.

The ladies reached the deck at about eleven o'clock, and greeted him in a manner that spoke of a genuine regret at their coming separation. The elder lady soon remembered a trifle that she had left undone in her state-room, and withdrew, so that the young people were left together. Berrien then made a remark that he had promised himself he would make:

"I wish I could tell you, so that you would believe me, how much more enjoyable this trip has been to me than any other I have ever taken."

"Why can't you?" she asked smiling at the oddity of his expression.

"I don't know." He was trembling just a trifle. "It may be because the trip has been so totally novel, or it may be because I am seldom believed. I have an unfortunate reputation at home for innocent fibbing."

"That is too bad. You are to be pitied for being so handicapped. Why don't you form a new set of acquaintances and reform, and thus start on a new career and build up a new reputation?" She looked across the water at the first hazy line of land.

"I doubt if the sacrifice of all my present friends would compensate for the acquisition. It would be difficult for me to find another lot of friends as valuable and enjoyable as my present ones unless you and your Aunt would consent to act as a nucleus. It is a hard thing to make friends enough to keep one in good spirits through life unless one begins in childhood. I might manage, however, if I could find a few like you. In such a case quality might more than balance quantity."

She blushed a trifle and called his attention to the line on the edge of the water.

"If it were not wholly irregular I would almost ask that as a favor," he went on, in a moment.

"What is that?" she asked, as if she had forgotten his former words.

"Why, that you should help me in my friend-hunt by assuring me a sort of reserve capital." He was annoyed by her apparent inattention.

"We should have to be introduced before I could consent to that." She was prompt in her reply, and her words were firmly spoken.

He drew a breath of disappointment and surprise. "Are you, then, such a stickler for the idiocies of conventional society? I imagined that we had managed to avoid the necessity of the services of a third party. I confess I am disappointed."

"I am sorry, Mr. Berrien," she said, facing him, "but on this side of the Atlantic, as well as on the other side, I must remain a 'stickler,' as you so unkindly called me. In midocean there is no need for 'stickling.' But I do not like the word. I do not want to be formal, but our acquaintance has been altogether irregular, and I do not see how I can consent to keeping it up on its present footing. Let us drop the subject, especially as here comes Aunt Wheeler, who will talk for an hour about it. She is a 'stickler,' too.

He was raging within, but complacent without. He smiled to Mrs. Wheeler, and as the steamer glided past the shores of the coast, now approaching closer, he pointed out various places of interest and seemed to forget the episode. Yet Miss Spaulding's manner was so totally different from that which she had adopted almost from the beginning that he was not only annoyed but confused.

A couple of hours later the adieus were said and he parted from them. It was quite commonplace, their parting, almost casual, and he went on his way with the air of a man who has just passed an acquaintance on the street and exchanged the greetings of the

day. He burst into his program of work with quite an unusual vigor, and returned to America three months later with five new plays in mind.

It was perhaps a year after his landing in France that had left such a disagreeable impression on his memory that he was traveling between New York and Boston on a day train. The train-boy, having beguiled the passengers with newspapers, fruits and candies, was going through on his third trip, laden with an armful of those half-worn paper covered books that constitute an apparently imperishable stock. With a soft thud a sample copy fell on the cushion of the chair next to Berrien, and he mechanically picked it up without glancing at its title-page or cover, and read at random in the middle. It was a novel, one of that sort that he liked, he said, for its utter inanity, and he kept on reading merely because he was interested in nothing else just then. He had read two or three pages perhaps, when he came across a line that had an odd ring of familiarity. He read it again and again, and then putting his forefinger between the leaves to mark the place, he stopped to think where he had heard something like it before. It was useless, for his mind was an utter blank in that direction. Opening the book again he read on a few more lines in search of a corroborative context. He found it before he had gone far:

The girl gazed away off across the calm sea—so ran this part of the narrative—and her eyes rested vaguely on the dim line of the horizon, marked by the first signs of land. She replied slowly and with an internal pang, as of self-sacrifice: "Why should I help you in this? Are there not enough others in the world to call upon for aid whom you might meet in the regulation manner?"

"No, I doubt if the sacrifice of all my present friends could be compensated for except by the acquisition of other friends, all like you. It would be hard in any event, but it might be made easier if you would serve as a nucleus."

She felt that she was blushing when she replied: "I might consent to act in that capacity, as a sort of reserve capital,

if our meeting had been more conventional——”

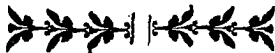
He gave a hasty sweep over the page with hot eyes that caught but half a dozen words, among them “stickler” and “mid-ocean” and “other side,” and others that he remembered with a sting of resentment. Then he snapped the book shut and looked at its cover. There was no mistake—she had utilized him. Her novel was entitled, “Between the Shores,” and she had written it under her own name, Ellen Spaulding, and now he knew why he had felt as if it were familiar to him. She had been writing for about five years.

When he had recovered from his first shock of wrath and chagrin he read the entire book through care-

fully, and he found that he had not only been used as a model, but that he had been made to serve as a hero, who had afterwards sought and regularly met the heroine—in whom he could not but detect some familiar traces—and that they had married and were living happily when the final page was reached.

The brakeman was shouting out the names of Boston's suburban towns when he closed the book, and as he discharged his financial obligations to the porter he mentally forgave her for her enterprise, and on alighting from the train he directed his steps toward the publishing house whose imprint was on the title page of her very interesting novel.

G. A. Lyon.





The Burro.

THERE is a little animal in the West whose life is of more real practical value to men than that of almost any other beast of burden. It is never known there by any other name than the one the Spaniards gave it long ago, that of burro, though in the East some of its distant cousins are dignified with the name of donkey. Now the history, life and experiences of this little animal are not without interest.

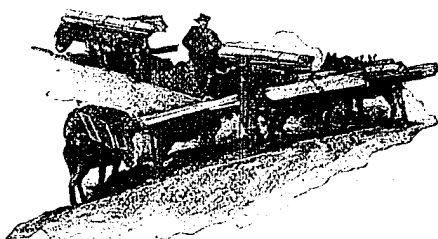
As to its presence in America, all sorts of theories have been advanced. On one point these arguments agree, that the burro was brought over from old Spain

to old Mexico by the daring gold seekers, and later by the Spanish missionaries. The burro's presence in New Mexico, California, Arizona and Colorado is generally admitted to have been due to the pioneer work of Francisco Vasquez Coronado, who in 1540 had the consent of the Spanish authorities in old Mexico to journey into the newly discovered lands north and to colonize them. In his expedition he had a drove of the Spanish donkeys used as pack animals, and these were without doubt the parents of the American burro family. So much for its history: now to its life and experiences.

The burro is a tiny beast, rarely growing beyond the four-hand mark, or three feet. He is unlike his eastern cousin, the donkey, in that his hair is long and shaggy, his temper mild, his Bray akin to the noise of a sawmill.

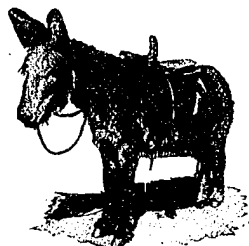
His weight averages 400 pounds, and on this little body, over the pack-saddle, he often carries burdens equal to his own weight. Nobody really

knows the actual life of a burro—some say twenty-five years, others forty, and still others claim he never dies at all. In talking recently with an old Rocky Mountain guide on this subject, he said, pointing to a moth-eaten bur-



PACKING LUMBER UP PIKE'S PEAK.

ro which was browsing on twigs, "Now, partner, that's old Dick. I bought him from the Pike's Peak trail people ten years ago; he had helped build that railroad which is 14,000 feet above the sea. The people I bought him from told me they had had



RAGS.
 An old-timer.

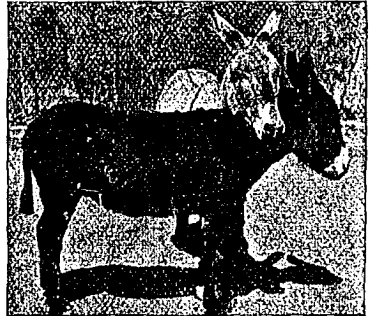


ON A MOUNTAIN TRAIL.

him seven years and he worked all the time, and that he was twenty-one years old when they bought him—and, partner, I'm gambling he's good for twenty years yet."

Naturally in the face of such evidence one is inclined to believe that burro thirty years of age is only in the prime of life. In the West the little animal is bought and sold for five or ten dollars, though an exceptionally fine and trained one may bring fifteen dollars. This is owing to the large

family he is in, and because his brothers and sisters don't die off quickly and make him more valuable. He pays his first cost over and over again to the prospector, the miner, the freighter, the ranchman and the cowboy. In every new mining camp burros are as numerous as men. On their little backs ore is packed and carried down mountain roads and along the edges of precipices where horses would not dare to tread. Then, again, the burro



ONE EMBRACE.

acts as a scavenger, devouring with avidity potato peelings, bacon scraps and general refuse which would otherwise accumulate about the miner's cabin and in the camp. That may be why he is often called a "mountain canary."



"ROOM UP FRONT."



IN SANTA FÉ.

It is a common sight to meet on any of the mountain trails the prospector and his burro. The prospector walks and the burro carries all his owner's worldly possessions and his working tools, often consisting of a camping mattress and blankets, frying pans and tin dishes, a sack of flour and bacon, and possibly an extra pair of boots; and on top of all a pick, crowbar, shovels and a small keg of giant powder.

What a picture that patient little beast makes! But he never grumbles, and his little hoofs when planted into those mountain trails are as sure-footed as a mountain goat's.

All through New Mexico the burro is found as the warm friend of the Pueblo Indian. In Santa Fé every morning hundreds of these animals are driven through the streets, their backs loaded with piñon wood; back of them comes the Indian driver wrapped in blankets of many colors, watching for a purchaser. In the Cheyenne Canyons in the Rocky Mountains there are droves of trained burros whose duty it is to carry tourists up the narrow trails and through the canyons. At certain places one may look straight down several thousand feet, and the part the tourist is on is perhaps only

half a dozen inches wide. One false step of the burro would mean death, but the false step is never made. A very curious feature about the habitation of the burro is that he never cares to live above a certain latitude. In Colorado, Pueblo and Colorado Springs are the northern limits. In Denver, or twenty-eight miles north from Colorado Springs, a burro is rarely seen.

As a child's pet the burro has few equals. Almost every western boy or girl living where the burro thrives has or has had one.

The animal seems to know the value of the charge on his back, even when the smallest tot is there, and walks about like a little old nurse, even if beaten vigorously. Often four or five urchins may be seen hanging on to the back of one of these veteran burros, who perhaps in his early days carried bags of the richest gold ore to the smelters, or perhaps packed food to some isolated mining mountain camp where the men were well-nigh starved; or again, on that very back the astronomical

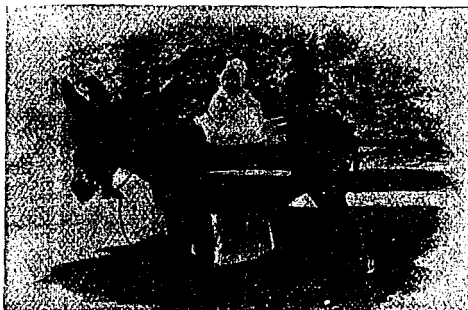
instruments of this and Great Britain's governments may have been packed and



"THREE OF US."



"WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER?"

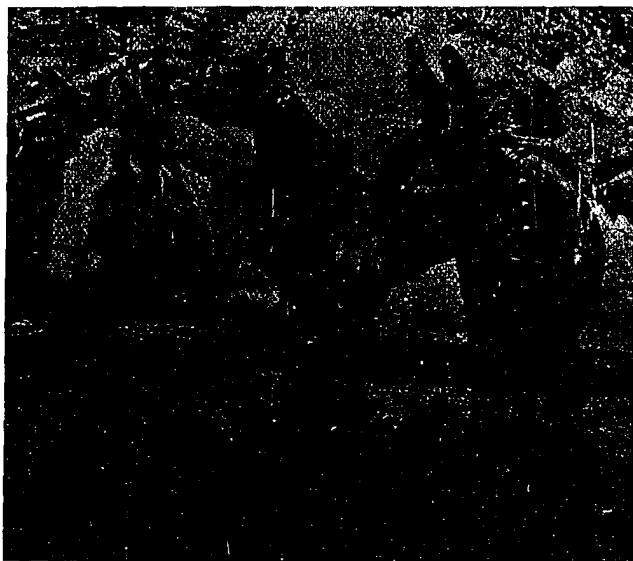


OLD BLUCHER,
Who helped build the road up Pike's Peak.

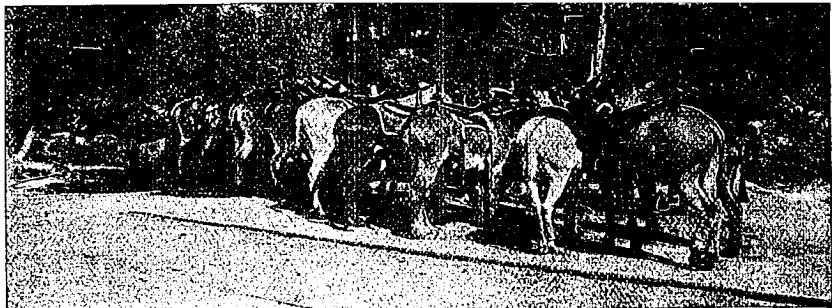
carried to the top of Pike's Peak, away back in 1876; but it makes no difference to the burro—he is happy if not beaten too much and if he is allowed to eat a little something; sleep he gets while standing up.

A number of burros have been shipped to Boston, New York and Philadelphia, but it is claimed in that seaboard climate

they are not a success. Those familiar with the habits of the burro have said that the failure of the animal to do well in the East was due more to ignorance in feeding and general treatment than to the climate. Like the proverbial goat who needs an occasional old straw hat, a boot-leg or a lithographed show bill to keep his stomach in proper con-



"ISN'T DINNER READY?"



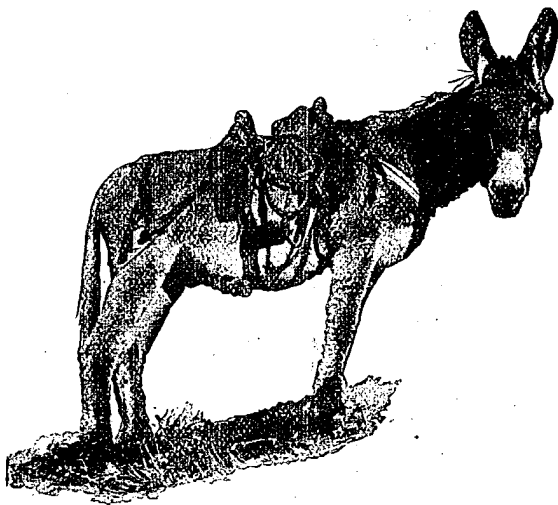
"CAN WE DO ANYTHING FOR YOU?"

dition, so the burro in his abundance of grain becomes dyspeptic for lack of the odd bits of potato peelings, bacon and "scraps" which were part of his *menu* at home. He becomes restless and sometimes wicked and has been known to die. That burros do die in the West is of course true; but one cowboy seemed to express the western public opinion when he said: "I've been with them by the hundreds and packed them on our round-ups all my

life, but I've yet to see one die. I believe they kinder get old-like and wither and just blow away."

The poor little animal's life is not always a happy one, and it is to be sincerely hoped that after all the good he has done this country and the aid he has rendered to the pioneers of the great West, somewhere in the great future there is a little space set apart as a burro-heaven.

Henry Russell Wray.



THE CHRONICLE OF CORA.

1.

“FOR a girl of her wealth and position,” people were wont to say of Cora Van Voorhis, “she has never been properly educated or trained.”

“Oh, yes,” would often come the answer, “you’re quite right. Cora’s parents, you know, died when she was very young, and left her under the care of that weary, languid, invalid grandmother, who lives on interminably and who must now be well past seventy.” Once, after the girl’s second social season, however, somebody started the report that she had become infatuated with a man surely ten years older than herself, an artist of fame, but by no means a fit match for her in any conceivable sense.

When her aunt, Mrs. Barclay Prendergast, heard this rumor, she turned pale with disgust. All that winter she chaperoned Cora at dances and receptions. She had now made up her mind that there was nobody better for the girl to marry than her third cousin, Richard Van Horne Prendergast, and more than once, of late, she had disclosed this conviction to her niece.

But Cora would always say: “Oh, yes, Dick,” with a shrug of her shoulders. “He asks me to marry him about once a week, and I always say no!”

“It’s time you said ‘yes,’” returned Mrs. Prendergast, with decision. “He’s not as rich as you are, but he’s no pauper. I wish your grandmother were not so old and so careless about you. It seems to me that she does nothing but doze in her arm-chair nowadays. If she were only stronger, Cora, you could come with me to Europe this summer, couldn’t you?”

Cora started. “Europe!—Oh, I much prefer staying here—that is, I—*I ought* to stay, you know, on grand-mamma’s account.”

“She’s thinking of *him*,” mused Mrs. Prendergast, “she’s thinking of Julian

Borland, that queer, clever, half-Bohemian fellow, with a past that some people say would be blood-curdling if revealed. How I do wish I could take her with me to Paris and Hamburg and Vichy! And there’s no use of speaking to poor, dear, drowsy old Mrs. Van Voorhis. She’d forget what I’d said in ten minutes’ time. The only person to whom I can confide my horrible dread is the scorned and neglected Dick.”

This the lady did, and one day, a week or two after her departure, Dick Prendergast said to Cora:

“That Julian Borland isn’t a fit sort of a chap for you to know.”

Cora crimsoned to her temples, and very pretty temples they were, with the faintest little blue hieroglyphs of interblent veins, and a flossy recession of glistening flaxen hair from either.

“I don’t at all like that, Dick,” she said. “Julian Borland is a man who has *done* something. At least you’ll admit *that*.”

These piqued words may have affected Dick stabbingly. He did not look as if they had. His countenance was not an emotionally betraying one. Calm, tallish, decorous of demeanor, you would scarcely have noticed him in a crowd. Knowing him and exchanging a few words with him, you would have taken for granted that he was a gentleman, and possibly that would have been all. You would doubtless have failed to observe in his commonplace hazel eye a spark that seemed to hint of courage, endurance, manful probity.

“Oh, Borland has *done* something, if you please,” said Dick. “But his reputation of having lived in Rome a rather dissolute life for many years before he came here and began his lectures on art, is widely known and remembered. I think you told me that you first met him at one of Mrs. Coventry Cortwright’s teas.”

“Yes.”

"That woman 'mixes' in a terrible manner. I never enter her house without feeling that I may meet my barber there."

Cora gave a quick, careless laugh. "I thought you once told me, Dick, that you hated snobbery."

"I don't *spea*k snobbishly, now. I speak—"

"Of a man," Cora broke in, making her blue eyes icy, "who has great talent and great charm. At least I think so."

"He's been quite often to see you, hasn't he?"

"He's been just six times." Here Cora visibly yawned. "Oh, I'm so sick of being watched by you! I wish Mr. Borland had come oftener. I'm sure it's not my fault that he hasn't."

Dick Prendergast stifled a sigh. "Are you and your grandmother sure of where your'e going this summer?"

"Yes—to Oceanview. It's only a little way from town, you know, and they say the hotel is splendid."

"It's certainly very big."

"The doctor can come to grandma whenever she sends for him. Last year she simply hated Newport; it was so far away from her beloved Dr. Rutledge."

"But she's seldom really ill."

"She's merely old, Dick, and nervous about being away from the physician she worships. I dare say grandma will live to be over ninety. She hasn't an ache or a pain. It often seems to me that she just sits in her arm chair and wonders why she isn't an actual invalid."

After a pause Dick asked, fingering his watch-chain with drooped head. "May I run down to Oceanview now and then, this summer, Cora?"

"Oh, if you want."

"You mean that *you* won't specially want."

Cora laughed again. "I'll send for you if I do."

And then Dick became angry. Indignation was a very rare occurrence with him, and now, when his nerves tingled with it, his face hardly gave a sign of its inward disarray.

"Now, see here, Cora," he said, with a kind of smoldering bluntness.

"You'll only see me, as you put it, when you *do* send for me. I don't mean this summer; I mean next winter, and a good while to come. You know that big farm out in Jersey that father left me. I'm going there, and I'm going to stay there. The house is comfortable, and with a few good servants and some good horses as well, I expect to get along in a fairly pleasant way. You know the address; you've written me notes when I was there and you needed me to come into New York and do you some little service. It's a very easy address to remember: 'Richard V. H. Prendergast, Prendergastville, New Jersey.' It's only two hours and a half from New York. . . . There; good by. Will you shake hands?" Cora replied at first with a haughty stare. Then she said: "Why are you going away like this?"

All Dick's anger had fled, now. "I am going away because I love you and you don't love me. . . . Won't you shake hands, Cora?"

"No."

II.

But the front door had no sooner closed upon Dick's departing figure than Cora burst into repentant tears.

"I didn't mean *really* 'no,'" she murmured to herself, wiping her eyes. "I-I only meant a kind of make-believe 'no.' Dear old Dick! It seems too horrid that he shouldn't be near me any more—near me, I mean, so that I could just stretch my hand out and find him!"

Before the middle of June Cora and her grandmother were handsomely installed at Oceanview. The hotel was immense and faultlessly arranged. It rose in all its mammoth delicacy and stateliness of architecture from a huge level of sandy shore, on which the mutable old ocean wreaked every mood of shine and shade, of peace and wrath, of tempest and calm.

"I'm so glad you brought me here," Mrs. Van Voorhis would say to Cora,

while she sat in her rocking-chair on the spacious upper piazza which six long, broad windows of her apartments allowed her to reach with instant ease. "You're *sure*, dear, are you not, that Dr. Rutledge could come to me *very* soon in case I were taken ill?"

"Oh, yes, grandmamma. It isn't like Newport, you know. But then you're not going to be taken ill." And Cora would smooth the sparse, breeze-blown locks of the old lady's hair, silver as the neighboring sea itself.

"I wonder if he really meant that he would come here during the summer," Cora kept asking herself, as June merged into July. She was thinking always of Julian Borland, and wondering if he would really appear. Her associates in the vast hotel were few and not of her class, her world. It transpired, however, that she was the heiress, Miss Cora Van Voorhis, and often people spoke to her whom she somewhat disliked, but whom she never treated rudely. It was not in Cora's nature to treat anybody rudely, except her absent suitor, Dick. This, as her Aunt Prendergast had often said, was a sign of defective education—an evidence of how her grandmother had forlornly failed, both as duenna and disciplinarian.

She fell quite soon into the habit of dining in the enormous refectory of the hotel. She liked to watch the masses of droll, curious and interesting folk who came up from town to saunter on the beach and eat the *table d'hôte* dinner before they returned again into the heats and tediums of urban haunts. In this way she became acquainted with a Mrs. Cornelia Janeway Devere, and soon got to know that lady very well indeed.

"You're one of the 'Four Hundred,' are you not?" Mrs. Devere had presently said to her. "I've seen your name on the newspaper lists of the fashionables—Miss Cora Van Voorhis—why, of course I have! And I read an article about you, stating that you were one of the greatest 'catches' of New York."

"I *heard* about that article," said

Cora, rather timidly. "But my aunt, Mrs. Prendergast (who's in Europe, now) begged me not to get the newspaper it was in; so I didn't."

"And why haven't you lots of beaux down here all the time?" asked Mrs. Devere, with smiling effusion. "I should think you would. But perhaps you don't want them to come."

"Last year was my first in society," replied Cora. "I met a good many gentlemen, but I somehow didn't get to know any of them at all well." She paused, coloring. She was thinking of how Dick had obstinately planted himself midway in the current of all new male acquaintanceship, and of how her secret yet passionate infatuation for Julian Borland had afterward made her indifferent, almost uncivilly so, to every fresh admirer, whether timid or bold.

Mrs. Devere nodded blithely. "I guess that was your fault, not theirs! For you *are* so pretty, and you're as simple as a violet. I don't suppose you've ever read my novel, 'Violet Vivian,' have you?"

"No," said Cora. "I've not read many novels. Is it anything like 'Adam Bede'?" I've read that, and I've read 'Jane Eyre.' I liked 'Jane Eyre' a good deal. 'Violet Vivian' is a lovely name for a story."

Mrs. Devere, who was portly, with a fat pale face, and small black eyes, mused for a moment. "Oh, those books," she soon said, "are not a bit in my style. I—er—don't write like that. I—er—try to touch the human heart. Would you believe it, Miss Cora, I've written eighteen novels?"

"Eighteen!" murmured Cora, aghast with admiration. "How *can* you write novels? I've often wondered how anybody could."

Mrs. Devere talked a great deal, for several days afterward, about her literary popularity and success. But she was very careful not to state that both had latterly waned in a telling way, and that the public was beginning to find out how flimsy and even trashy had been the works with which she had managed to secure its temporary heed.

Soon afterwards she sent into town for three or four of her most successful romances, and presented them to Cora with an affectionate inscription on each initial page. Cora read them with delight.

"Oh, how wonderfully clever you are!" she exclaimed, one day. "I've been telling grandmamma what a great genius I think you. I gave her 'Violet Vivian' to read yesterday, and it kept her awake through a whole chapter."

"Indeed!" murmured Mrs. Devere, bridling a little.

"Oh, that's something immense, you know, for poor, feeble, sleepy old grandmamma!"

"Yes, I see."

"And are you really writing another story now?" pursued Cora. "Is that why you spend all your mornings alone in your room?"

"Yes; that is why," said Mrs. Devere.

"This novel is my masterpiece. It takes a good deal out of me—in the way of feeling, I mean. *I become* my own characters. A publisher of much repute (there's no need to mention names) has offered me a—er—really enormous price for it."

This, it may be mentioned without delay, was apocryphal. No publisher had offered her any sum whatever for the story still unfinished. Her popularity had of late waned so remarkably that after the completion of each new novel she would now accept rather than dictate terms. But she was disinclined to step down from that pedestal of commercial success on which report had long ago placed her. As for conscientious pangs, these rarely troubled her in the continuance of her little masquerade. Furious at the fickle throng which had deserted her, she would have maintained by almost any form of falsehood a semblance of the notoriety she had lost.

New defeat made her jealous of all successful writers. She was scarcely an educated woman, and yet she presumed to speak with contempt of real artists in letters, her natural antipodes.

The irreverent things that she said about them were rather hysteric than malicious. But Cora drank in all her diatribes as though they were a valuable intellectual outflow.

"I should so love to have you read me some pages of your new novel," she said, one day. And Mrs. Devere, who always cherished an admiring listener, readily consented.

They had begun to spend mornings together in either the author's own chambers or some cool and semi-private nook on one of the hotel piazzas. "Oh, I do think it's so lovely and powerful," Cora at length said. "And Marion is such a sweet creature! But how hateful Lydia is! I *know* you won't be cruel enough to let her marry Trevor Willoughby, after all. *Will* you now?"

"Oh, I can't say, I can't say," returned Mrs. Devere, with an emotion much more genuine than some people would have given her credit for. "My characters do with me what they please. I create them, you know," (she had never created a real character in all her so-called "literary" career) "and then they just take hold of me and make me their actual *slave*! I cry with them, laugh with them, and let them behave exactly as they please."

Cora mused, a little later, concerning her new friend: "What a great writer she must be! She has genius, of course. Isn't it splendid to have genius, like that? *He* has it, though he's a painter not a writer. I wonder if he wouldn't like me better, provided *I* could write grandly, just as he paints grandly—And I wonder, too, if he'll truly appear at Oceanview this summer. Perhaps he won't. Perhaps he *doesn't* intend, after all, to come here and paint sea-side 'effects,' as he calls them."

But on the morrow Julian Borland drifted quietly into the hotel. Cora caught a glimpse of him at a far-off table in the great dining-room that same evening. Her heart stood still, and it seemed to her that she must be turning disreputably pale.

Later he met her on the piazza. She could scarcely speak to him, at first.

"Yes, the sea *is* lovely," she at

length found herself saying. "Did you come here to paint it?"

"I've brought my traps along," he answered. "I shall certainly make some sketches. It's a very pleasant surprise to find you here." His dark eyes, which she thought so melancholy and so beautiful, beamed down upon her in an absent way. They seemed to regard her without caring much whether they did so or not. Her heart, which had fluttered with timidity, now beat in a rebellious pain.

Speaking those carelessly amicable words he moved away from her, and she watched his tall form and his short, curled hair, dashed with gray, as he moved down through the twilight toward the sea.

"He isn't glad I'm here," she passionately thought. "He doesn't care for me in the least. He'll forget all about me till he sees me again!"

It was not long before Mrs. Devere discovered her secret. "So that is how the wind blows," thought the lady. "Can it be possible that this man has come here to try and get engaged to our young heiress? I'll watch and observe."

But she soon found that Cora was hardly more an object of concern in the artist's eyes than if she had been one of the chambermaids upstairs.

For two days afterward she was very vigilant yet very wary. She did not allow Cora to note how intently she was observing. Once she saw her young friend walking with Julian Borland on the shore, and once she saw her seated beside him while he made a water-color sketch under a big yellowish umbrella whose stick he had plunged supportingly in the sand. Cora sat outside the shade of the umbrella, with her hands folded demurely in her lap. Now and then she looked seaward; now and then she turned her head and met the gaze of the artist. And once their watcher plainly perceived that they were laughing together, he more heartily than she.

"It's the clearest case of a young girl's mad infatuation," mused Mrs. Cornelia Janeway Devere. "She's

barely twenty, and with only that sleepy, indifferent old grandmother to take care of her. And I've often heard that he's led the queerest life abroad; of course he *can't* be a *good* man, with all those scandals printed about him in the newspapers two or three years ago. I recollect it was said of him that he is the most brilliant American artist who ever stepped foot in Rome. But what *can* Cora see in his sad, oldish face, with that tired look under the eyes? They're handsome eyes, sure enough; they make me think of that bad Mark Erwin's in my novel, 'True Hearts and False.' But my Mark, for all his badness, never had that bristly reddish moustache nor that chronic stoop of the shoulders. I *must* have a talk with Cora and find out just what it all means."

III.

"So you like women to be clever, Mr. Borland, and only care for them when they are."

"Oh, I didn't say that Miss Cora." And Borland went on painting for several minutes quite assiduously, below the shade of his ample, tawny umbrella.

"You seemed to imply it," answered Cora, who was making a mound of sand at his side. She had piled the mound quite high, and now she began to turn it into an archway, as children do, by excavating a passage at its base. While she performed this indolent little act of impromptu architecture Julian Borland went on painting as he spoke:

"Beauty seems to me a very important charm in a woman. But I confess that I've never found it indispensable."

"No?" murmured Cora.

"I've known women who had scarcely a ray of good looks, yet whose minds were stored with interest, with fascination. . . By the way, my child, isn't it getting rather chilly for you here in that thin dress? The wind's changed to an easterly one, as my rocking umbrella shows, and this

clouded sky hints decidedly of rain."

"Oh, I'm not a bit cold," said Cora. She hated to have him call her "my child," in this aggravatingly paternal way. "But if you *want* me to go," she pursued—and then she blushed crimson at her own airy familiarity. In another minute she rose, but not before she had given her sand-mound a swift little ruining stroke.

Julian Borland rose, too. He answered her, but absently, as though he were thinking of somebody or something else. How Cora hated in him that occasional reserved and distant manner. It seemed to place miles and miles between them.

He was gathering together his artistic out-of-door traps as he said: "Why, of course I don't want you to go. I like you to sit by me and watch me daub, your juvenile sort of curiosity about it all is very pleasant—very pleasant, I assure you." Then, as they walked toward the hotel together below the darkening summer sky, "None of the gossips can prattle, either, can they? For I'm old enough, you know, to be your father."

"*Are you?*" breathed Cora, stung to the soul. "You don't seem old to me, somehow."

He threw back his goly-templed head, and laughed loudly. She saw how white and strong his teeth were. These did not make him seem old.

"Don't I? Don't I, really? How charming! well, perhaps I'm *not* old enough to be your father, but I often feel so. I often feel—eighty. I've lived, very probably, more than most men of my age."

"Is that your reason for liking clever—people?" asked Cora. She was going to finish her question with "women," but she did not dare. The boldness of such an ending pierced her with dismay.

They were now almost at the steps of the hotel. He looked down at her, from his overtopping height. He gave her no response, and the smile that played on his lips had for her an effect of revery, of abstraction. "He doesn't even listen to me," she thought, and

her heart quivered with distress. She ran up the steps quickly, and did not again dawn upon his vision till hours afterward.

Meanwhile she had seen and talked with Mrs. Devere in the privacy of that lady's own apartment. "Why," she asked of her new friend, "will you not let me present Julian Borland to you?"

"Dear, dear!" laughed the lady. "Do you know, Cora, he wouldn't look at me twice? He *never* looks twice at a woman unless she's comely and young. Oh, as I told you, I've heard all about him, *long ago!*"

"You're wrong," said Cora, very seriously. "He likes clever women only. I'm sure of it! Now, if I had written such a novel as your last one!"

"You mean the one I'm finishing—Myrtle Meredith?"

"Oh, are you going to call it that? Yes, I see: after the heroine. What a lovely name it will make! How I envy you!"

"Envy me? For what, pray?"

"Oh, your great cleverness. If I were only half as clever, *he* might think me worth his notice! Now—*now*, he thinks me beneath it."

The girl's eyes glittered with unshed tears. She was betraying her secret with the most reckless kind of candor. But somehow she did not care, just then; she felt fierce and desperate.

"My dear child!" exclaimed Mrs. Devere, advancing toward her.

"Oh, *don't* speak to me like that!" she quavered, shrinking away. "*He* calls me 'child,' and—and there are times when I feel that I could strike him for it!"

"You're so fond of him, then?" said Mrs. Devere, with great gentleness.

Cora burst into tears. "Sometimes I hate him," she cried, and hid her face.

Mrs. Devere patted and smoothed her drooping head. "What *shall* I say to you? It isn't as if you were some ordinary person."

Cora flashed a passionate glance at her. "You mean that I'm rich? Oh! I so detest being rich and a fool! If I were poor and—and intellectual, like

you! Not that I mean *you're* poor, of course," she added, with a little self-corrective, hysterical laugh. "Indeed no—with all those books that thousands of people read! But—"

"I'm often almost in need of money, my dear," interjected her auditor, half wailfully. "These publishers, you know, are such dreadfully close and cruel creatures! They grind authors down so!"

"Do they, really?" said Cora. She was drying her eyes now in a repentant and mortified way.

"Oh, yes. I would be glad if I knew just what terms I can get for 'Myrtle Meredith.' I'm not at all sure. I—I believe that I'd accept five thousand dollars for it to-morrow, if I could receive that sum as they vulgarly say 'cash down.'"

"Five thousand dollars!" said Cora, wonderingly. She had about as clear an idea of money as a gnat of the pool it swims in. Since her coming of age she had had her own cheque-book, and had drawn whatever sums it had suited her needs to draw. The family lawyer had told her she could not exceed a certain amount unless she gave him warning. She had forgotten what the amount was, but she felt certain that her deposit for personal conveniences didn't reach five thousand dollars. Still, the lawyer had told her that a note or telegram at any time would promptly be answered. "Your income, Miss Van Voorhis," he had respectfully and rather dryly said to her, "is something a little outside of sixty-eight thousand dollars a year. It is quite apart from the income of your grandmother, which is slightly less than fifty thousand dollars a year. As she has only a life interest in the family property, and as everything has been settled upon yourself, you would become, in case of her death, the possessor of nearly, if not quite, one hundred and twenty thousand dollars a year."

Cora, remembering all this while she still wiped her eyes, murmured once more: "Five thousand dollars? Why that's the merest *bagatelle*, isn't it? And for such a novel as 'Myrtle Mere-

dith!' They ought to give you thousands and thousands more."

Mrs. Devere sighed. "It's very sweet of you to tell me so!" Suddenly she started, and took one of Cora's hands in a fondling way. "How I would like," she said, "to *sell* (oh, I do so hate to use that word, and yet I must use it,) my manuscript to *you* for that amount!"

Cora's head heightened, and her blue eyes widened. "I don't understand you."

Mrs. Devere released her hand, and spoke on in a plaintive musing way: "I should be so willing to make over 'Myrtle Meredith' to you, for your very own! Nobody but yourself knows I've written it, and I shall have finished it in a very short time, now. It could be brought out under your own name. It would be *your book*. I couldn't *give* it; I only wish that I could! But I could *let you have it*, my dear, for five thousand—the same sum a publisher would to-morrow hand me out for it, don't you see? And as for secrecy—"

"Oh, hush, Mrs. Devere!"

Cora, understanding, had sprung to her feet. She felt dizzy, and even reeled a little. "That would be too horrible! *I* to pass myself off as the author of *your book*! That is what you mean isn't it?" She scanned her friend's face with fervid eyes.

"Don't think of the matter any more, my dear," said Mrs. Devere, with an inward fright that she tried to conceal behind an air of her pitying benignance. "Remember I have been prompted only by the friendliest feelings. It wouldn't be the least gain to *me*, you know. I merely thought of your satisfaction, contentment, happiness—whatever one may rightly call it."

"I see, I see," said Cora. Her eyes were quite dry, now, and her cheeks were two fiery roses. Without another word she slipped from the room.

A little later she found herself walking beside the sea. It was almost sunset. The ending of the day looked somewhat sombre in the west, but eastward, over a drab lapse of light-rippled

ocean, the sky was fretted into little cloudy fragments of pink and silver.

"It's horrible," she mused, "and I will *not* do it! It's hypocrisy, falsehood, sin—it's positive forgery! The idea of my being tempted! Of course I'm *not*!"

After a while she re-entered the hotel. A number of people were gathered in knots throughout the wide main hall. A train had just arrived; some of the ladies wore their bonnets, and two or three of the porters were busied with trunks and bags.

Presently she saw Julian Borland, almost at her elbow. He did not perceive her. He was in close conversation with a large, fair woman, whose eyes, Cora quickly pronounced, were the most beautiful liquid dark-blue, though the rest of her face looked tired and despondent.

"You're here for only one night?" she heard Julian say.

"Yes," was the answer. "We've just run down here for a breathing spell. Mr. Towerly thought I needed it. We sail in three days for Europe, however, and shall be gone a good while—probably a full year."

"Back to Rome, I suppose?"

The lady laughed in silvery semitone. "Paris first, then Hamburg, and finally Rome. Meanwhile we shall have had some precious glimpses of certain old friends here."

"Will you remember me to all my old friends *there*?" said Borland, with earnestness.

"Of course I will, and you shall be there, too, before the winter, shall you not?"

"I don't know; I hope to return soon. But I must tell you how your last book charmed me."

"'Constantia'? Did you like it?"

"*Like* it? I think it the most perfect study of modern Roman life that has ever been written. I don't merely admire you for having written it; I thank you, individually, with all my heart."

Then the speakers moved away, and their voices died with their receding forms.

"'Constantia,'" thought Cora, while

her gaze followed them. "Then she must be that Mrs. Douglass Towerly, of whom the newspapers have been gossiping—the American lady who lived so long in Rome and married an American sculptor there . . . 'Constantia'—yes, I read it; I have it among my books at home in town. It struck me as rather stupid; there wasn't much conversation in it, and nothing very lively 'happened', from the first page to the last. It doesn't compare with 'Myrtle Meredith'—no, indeed! . . . And if he feels like this toward the author of so dull a book, how might he change toward *me*, provided——?"

Poor Cora stopped there. She was in the toils of a horrible temptation. She had an impulse to go to her grandmother, and fling herself at the old lady's feet, and confess to her everything. But in that case what, more than probably, would happen? Would not Mrs. Van Voorhis merely give her a drowsy smile, and tell her that she was very silly to have had such fancies, and forget, in a few minutes, that she had made any remark more important than a prophecy about to-morrow's weather?

Indeed, on re-seeking her grandmother, that evening, Cora found her unaccustomedly peevish and fretful, and prone to mention with reproach the fact of her prolonged absence. So she stayed upstairs, having her dinner privately served there . . . When, at about nine o'clock that evening, Mrs. Van Voorhis had sunk into a sleep both placid and permanent, Cora stole to the apartments of Mrs. Devere . . . She still appeared flushed and excited, then. But on departing, two good hours afterward, she was pale, and wore a strained, un wonted look about the close-joined lines of her lips.

IV.

"So you've written a book, really," said Julian Borland, in his grave yet genial way.

"Yes," replied Cora, "it will be out some time in September, I think."

He broke into a laugh, long and

hearty. Then, as he saw Cora's darkening face, he suddenly silenced the laugh. "I hope I've not offended you."

"No. But is there anything so very strange in my having written a book?"

"Not at all. And yet—please pardon me, but I never suspected you of a literary turn."

Cora bit her lips. "You thought me too frivolous, perhaps."

"Frivolous? Oh, indeed, no! Hundreds—I may say thousands, of frivolous women, young and old, write books."

"Oh, no doubt."

"By the way," he went on, "I saw you speaking this morning with that Mrs. Devere. Do you like her?"

Cora tried not to color. "We're very good friends."

"M-m-yes," said Julian Borland, meditatively. "Your book's a novel, I think you told me?"

"A novel—yes."

"Does—er—this Mrs. Devere know about it?"

"She's seen—some of the manuscript."

He leaned rather far backward in the big wicker-work chair he had taken at her side, on a shaded part of the piazza, which commanded a dazzling amplitude of noonday sea. "And pray tell me, does Mrs. Devere approve of it?"

After a pause Cora contrived to say, quite tranquilly: "Yes; she likes it; she thinks rather highly of it."

For some time Julian Borland kept silent, staring straight seaward. At length he said: "I've read some of this lady's writings."

"She *thought* you had," said Cora, with eagerness. "She told me that she expected you'd ask to be presented to her. She knows how famous *you* are. I don't know that I should tell you that she *did* expect you'd seek to know her. But if you cared to meet her—"

"Oh, thanks; thanks very much. I'm so completely a recluse while here, don't you know, I scarcely know a soul in the hotel, except yourself—your

charming self," he added, and as he added it Cora felt her heart flutter and then beat with strong, quick strokes.

"Not that I want to be in the least uncivil," Julian Borland soon went on. "Oh, no; surely not that . . ." And then, from the sly glance Cora stole at his face, it seemed to her that his thoughts were wandering. He had clasped his hands in his lap, and had the air of studying them as he pursued: "Might I—er—*see* this novel of yours? I mean, if you have it in manuscript. I-I should like very much to glance it over before I go."

"Before—you—go?" faltered Cora.

"Yes; I've determined to visit Japan, and take that roundabout way back to my beloved Rome."

"Shall you start—soon?"

"I shall be here at the hotel a few days longer. Afterward I go to Boston to stay for a week with some relatives there."

The sparkle of the sea turned to a leaden dullness for Cora. She hardly knew, for hours afterward, what she did or said. At last it seemed as if certain words of Mrs. Devere's were rousing her from a kind of animate torpor.

"It will be typewritten by to-morrow. They're to send it down here as soon as it's done. You might let him see it in that shape, after I've gone over it and noted the errors. You know how they creep into typewriting. Perhaps, after he has read the novel, he will wholly change his opinion of you."

"Very well—very well," said Cora.

She felt desperately wicked and desperately wretched.

"Do—do you think it would keep him from going away?" she asked, with a piteous, forlorn look at her evil counsellor.

"I dare say that it might," replied Mrs. Devere. Then the lady's black eyes took a certain snappish glitter. "It certainly should show him that you're not the 'child' he has patronizingly called you."

Cora scarcely slept at all that night. Whenever she was alone the next day

she murmured furtively, "How horrible I am! How I despise myself!" But when Julian Borland joined her and talked with her, she was thrilled by a wild, savage kind of gladness. This man had so dominantly charmed her that the sense of his indifference wrought in her spirit a moral defiance, as foreign to its usual right-doing as soilure to a lily.

When she gave him the typewritten manuscript, she had nerved herself into a bearing which she believed one of faultless composure. But Borland thought her manner tremulous, even agitated. He wondered at it, and then after he had gone up into his seaward-facing chamber, and laid the package on a table and lighted a cigarette, and gazed broodingly at the immense lustrous level of ocean which his windows commanded, he somehow ceased to wonder. For the first time a pang of conviction shot through him. He went back to the package, opened it, drew a chair to the table on which its pile of slippery sheets had been deposited, and began examining them with that quick, apprehensive method of a man accustomed to the reading of many books and the unconditioned approval of but few.

At last he leaned back in his chair and gave a long, deliberative sigh.

"Poor little thing! Poor, dear, tempted, foolish little thing! God help her if she'd fallen into the hands of some sordid fortune-hunter! He'd have found a church somewhere within a mile of this sand-strip called Ocean-view, and married her (and her big lot of money) without one compunctious thrill."

That same evening Mrs. Devere said to Cora: "My dear, you're looking really ill! you *shouldn't* be so anxious and nervous!"

"I can't help it," murmured Cora. "I—I feel so guilty, you know. If he tells me after reading 'Myrtle Meredith' that he thinks it a splendid work (and of course I'm *sure* he *will* tell me so!) I shall feel like fainting dead away at his feet."

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Devere, who

had just sent to her banker in town a certain cheque for five thousand dollars, which she secretly regarded as a financial god-send. "If he praises the book, and congratulates you on having written it, think how superb your triumph will be! *Then*, if he asks you to marry him——"

"Asks me to marry him!" cried Cora. "Oh, I—I hadn't thought of that!"

Mrs. Devere stared at her.

"My dear girl, if I didn't *know* that this masquerade of yours represents the first serious falsehood of your life, I should believe that you were not telling me the truth. You really mean it, then, when you say that you don't want him to make you his wife?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed Cora, furiously blushing. "I've never thought of marrying anybody—except my cousin Dick. And I've only thought of marrying him because he's asked me so often."

Mrs. Devere laughed almost convulsively for a minute. "In the name of Heaven, then, what are your feelings toward Julian Borland?"

"Oh, I don't know—I don't know! I don't want him to despise me, that's all. I admire him; I think he's *very* attractive. It tortures me that he should treat me as an unimportant person."

"Your feeling, then, my dear, is a whim, not a passion?"

"A passion?" echoed Cora, frightenedly. "No, no!"

"And as for marriage——"

"Marriage, Mrs. Devere? Oh, as for that, you know, there's always Dick—Mr. Prendergast."

"But you certainly don't hold Dick in reserve? It's too funny—its too preposterous!"

"I don't hold him in reserve—not at all. He—he holds himself."

"Oh, indeed."

"I'm aware that he's *waiting*. I can't help being aware."

"Naturally," said Mrs. Devere, "since you've told me that he's offered himself to you hundreds of times."

"Not hundreds—no!"

"Only a few scores, then. My dear," went on the lady, "you may as well face facts. You're *not* in love with Mr. Prendergast, and you're intensely attached to Julian Borland. He might make you very happy. Men like that often turn out irreplaceable husbands. They——"

"Oh, *please* stop!" cried Cora. She staid in her grandmother's rooms all the rest of that day, and an hour or two past dinner-time. By eight o'clock a servant brought her a brief note, which she read with leaping pulses. It was from *him*, and it asked her if she would take a little stroll with him on the great lower piazza this lovely, breezy evening.

Scarcely had she crossed the threshold of the main hall on the ground floor of the hotel, when he came forward from the dimness beyond. "Perhaps it's a little too warm to walk much," he said. "There are two comfortable chairs in a nook over yonder. Shall we take them and have a few minutes' chat?"

Cora gave an assenting nod. "I don't merely feel like a forger now," she thought; "I feel like a forger and a murderess both in one."

They were seated side by side in the dimness together, before another word passed between them. Then Julian Borland said:

"I've read 'Myrtle Meredith.' I finished it rather late this afternoon."

"Yes!"

"I——" He paused. I—er—didn't find *you* in it, somehow."

Cora gathered courage from the engirdling gloom. "Oh, then, you mean that you didn't think I had brains enough to write it?"

"Brains enough?" he repeated; and then she heard from him a soft, contemptuous laugh. "I'm very sure you haven't vulgarity enough, and bad taste enough, and general worldliness, folly, stupidity, coarseness enough."

"You're sure of this?" broke quivering from his half dazed listener.

"My dear Miss Van Voorhis," Julian Borland said, with great gentle-

ness and courtesy, "I don't know of anybody who could have written a compound of sillier art and trashier sentimentalism than this Mrs. What's-er-name Devere (I believe she has three names) who has of late been your close companion."

"Do you mean——?" Cora began thus, and then stopped, dead short. The rest stuck in her throat.

v.

"I mean that you have played a little practical joke on me," said Borland, "that's all. I'm not in the least angry, however. It's just what a young girl of your brightness and buoyancy might do to a sober old fellow like myself. I think it funny; I even relish it. But if I were younger—if I were not a good ten years or so older than you are I might enjoy it much more than I do. In that case I should cry out to you 'Oh, you thought you'd fool me with your friend's idiotic novel, but you didn't,' and all that sort of thing. Still, please don't fancy I'm not amused. All in all, it's a delightful little piece of harmless pleasantry. I congratulate you on it, and please believe me when I tell you that I'm frankly ashamed of myself for not accepting it in a spirit of greater gayety and good-humor."

His words at first had shocked and stung Cora. Then they had gave her a sickening sense of shame. Then, finally, they seemed to offer her a kind of wide-flung doorway through which she might escape with self-exonerating ease.

And meanwhile they had been such kindly, courteous, unaccusing and unsuspicious words! In another moment she was hastening to say:

"Oh, well, then, I admit it. Of course it *was* all a practical joke. But you were quite too wise to be deceived by me, were you not?"

He read her perfectly; he pitied her profoundly. But he gave her no sign of doing either.

"The fact is, I *am* rather wise—that is, wise in my generation. I've lived

somehow long, but I've lived a little more deeply, perhaps, than most men of my years. There have been reasons for my living deeply, though I perhaps appear to pose a bit when I so express myself. But I don't want to pose; I abhor that sort of thing; it's too much like one of Mrs. Somebody-or-other Devere's romantic and picturesque heroes. I'm really very unromantic and unpicturesque, if one looks at me square and full. I've been to blame for a few follies in life, but life has punished me pretty well afterward. Most of my youth, as an artist in Rome, was what is called wild, though never truly vicious. Some men have only to wink, and it's talked about; others can sneeze twenty times in succession and not a soul pretends to hear them. I'm of the former class. Never was notoriety less deserved than that which cried from the house-tops my 'affairs of the heart!' I've not had in all my days but one such 'affair'."

"But one?" Cora repeated, unaware that she spoke at all.

"And that, for a good while past, has had quite its own way with me. I don't mean that it's wrecked me or blasted me or shattered me, or done anything to me so lurid, so Byronic, so sensational; but I do mean that it's broken me more than I sometimes like to think about. Possibly you saw a Mrs. Towerly, who was here with her husband a few days ago. They merely staid one night; they were soon going back to Rome."

"Yes," Cora said, as he paused. It struck her that his voice, in its fine, mellow volume, had strangely and richly lowered and saddened. "I saw her, and I saw you speaking with her. She is the author, I learned, of that novel 'Constantia.' I had read it. I heard it talked about, and so I got it. I remember the name on the title page—'Agnes Towerley.'"

"She was Agnes Netherwood, not very long ago. Her father is a celebrated sculptor (perhaps you know this) who had lived for years in Rome. She had many admirers. Not that she was either beautiful or wealthy, but

she had the art of winning friends—and adorners. I don't know how many of the latter she had before she consented to marry one of them. She might have married a prince or two whom I know. She might have married me, if she had chosen, and I ranked very low among her throng of devoted suitors. But she preferred a young sculptor—not at all a famous one, either. Like her father, he made statues; like her father, he wasn't at all rich; and like her father he was a thoroughly good fellow." Here Julian Borland gave a melancholy little laugh, which had a kind of vocal heart-break in it for the ears of his hearer. "It often seems to me that I am unique among all her lovers. They have risen from their attitudes of genuflection, have rubbed their knees, as it were, and gone to worship at other shrines. I—well, I haven't. I have somehow got a wound that bleeds in a sluggish way, now and then, and that will not heal for all the balms in Gilead. I dare say her husband knows all about it. I'm sure she hasn't told him; she's too loyally high-bred for that. No doubt I've told him myself. Not in any spoken words, I mean, of course. But I'm rather convinced that he knows, and I'm rather convinced that he knows I'm *aware* he knows. It's altogether a very peaceful and agreeable little arrangement. When, after my earth-girdling peregrinations, I get back to Rome, I shall dine with Agnes and John, and be as intimate with one as with another. I'm going to paint her portrait, and he'll have no more hesitation in letting her come to my studio, and sitting three hours there to me, than if he were putting her into a cab on Fifth Avenue or Piccadilly, and waving her a careless *au revoir*. But for myself, I shall go on suffering. That's all; I shall simply go on suffering. There's no escape, no release. Agnes has always liked me, and she's thoroughly aware that I would take the heart out of my breast, if I could, and break it into little pieces before her, provided she gave the permissive signal. So it has gone on of late, and so it has gone on in

the past. And so I imagine, it will——"

Here Cora rose. It seemed to her that she stood unsteadily on her feet, that her form slightly swayed. But this was only a figment of her confused and fevered mind.

"Good night," she said.

"You're going so soon?" He, too, had risen. He put out his hand in the gloom. She did not even pretend not to see it; but seeing it perfectly, she answered, in placid monotone:

"Yes, grandmamma may need me. I must go now." And then she hesitated. His quiet monologue had made her forget the whole episode of her own false impersonation—forget it only to recall it with overwhelming stress. One minute she felt the impulse to disburden herself of a guilty secret, the next a passionate exultation at the thought of his having believed it all a half-childish practical joke.

"Good night," she repeated, and hurried away. It appeared an endless time before she reached her own room, and before she had gained its door the lights in the wide hall had danced with flaming zigzags, and the interminable strip of carpet had risen and fallen in serpentine waves.

That night was crucial. She sobbed for hours, only sleeping at some time near dawn. Her grandmother noted no change in her, but when she met Mrs. Devere it was different.

"My dear," said the author of "Myrtle Meredith," "your cheeks are paper and your eyes are glass. What *have* you been doing with yourself?"

"Oh, nothing. Only—*living*." Here Cora tried to smile, and failed.

"I received the novel and your note," went on Mrs. Devere, with tart solemnity.

"Yes; he sent it to me this morning. There was a letter with it. He has been suddenly called away from Oceanview this morning, as I in turn wrote you when I gave you back the manuscript."

"Then you'll not see him again till——"

"I shan't ever see him again," said Cora, "at least, I hope not."

Mrs. Devere looked thoughtful. "His guess was a flattering one to me, certainly. I didn't know that I had such a distinctive style. You haven't told me whether he thought it a good one or no."

"He—he said it was plainly recognizable as yours," answered Cora, stammering a little.

"Oh, indeed? That's a dubious compliment. And so our little conspiracy——"

"Has been crushed—quite crushed."

The lady's face turned rueful and plaintive. "And all that money! I—*I must* give it back to you now—must I not?"

"Don't dream of giving it back to me, Mrs. Devere. It's the price of my silliness. Besides, you know, I shan't miss it."

"Oh, thanks, *thanks!*" replied Mrs. Devere, infinitely relieved. "And yet it does seem so—so dishonest in me to take it that way."

"Then take it as little gift from me, and please never mention it again."

"Ah," sighed the lady, "how magnificent you millionaires can be!" In another second she had cried out, with the most genuine sincerity pulsing through her tones: "You're very unhappy! I can see that you are! I wish I could help you!"

"Nobody can help me but myself," said Cora, with a simplicity that in its way was sublime.

Not long afterward, in the big lower hall of the hotel, she found herself face to face with Richard Prendergast.

"Dick!" she exclaimed. "Why, what brings *you* here?"

"I'll tell you, Cora, if you'll come where we can talk privately." They had soon strolled out upon the firm, pearly sweep of sand which fronted the hotel and also flanked it for a mile or two on either side. The summer day was cool yet dullish. A woolley film of cloud whitely overspread the heaven. From the invisible sun faint prismatic tints were waked in the monstrous oily calmness of the ocean, whose

waves massed and broke with loitering and glittering grace upon the curved stretches of velvety beach.

Cora knew Dick Prendergast's face so well, in its rather heavy outlines of brow, cheek and chin, that it did not take her long to discover that he was both angered and grieved.

"You asked me, Cora, what brought me here. In the first place, I knew that Julian Borland is here. The newspapers follow him, you know——"

"He's gone," broke in Cora, a little sullenly. "He left this morning."

"Um—yes. Did he go with your five thousand dollars?"

This was a thunderbolt to Cora, but not a destructive one. She reared her head after the first bewildering effects of it, and answered with heat:

"How dare you, Dick?"

"Oh, he might have asked you for a loan like that, and you'd be just goose enough to give it to him."

"If he *had* asked me for such a loan I'd have given it to him in a minute," shot Cora. "And, what's more, I'd have been sure he would have repaid me—every dollar."

"Of course," muttered Dick. He was a little frightened at her demeanor; he had never seen her angry before. He was so much in love with her, however, that the most romantic admiration blended with his droll alarm. "You'd have tried to get him the moon, if he'd told you he wanted it."

"He didn't want it—that is, not from me. Yes, I'd have given him the moon, or tried to give it, if he'd made any such request. After all, he did want the moon," she added under her breath, too low for him to hear her. "He wanted it, and didn't get it."

"I see," said Dick Prendergast, gnawing his moustache. "You're still crazily infatuated."

Cora straightened her figure with indignant speed. Then she moved away, her downward glance following the variant foam-wreaths of the large, lazy surges. She spoke with averted face.

"Perhaps you're right, after a fashion," came her reply, in a voice unex-

pectedly tranquil. "Perhaps I *was* infatuated like that."

"And now, Cora?"

She turned, facing him. "How did you know about that five thousand? Who told you about it? Who on earth could have told you about it?"

"Your people in town—the guardians of your estate."

"Ah, yes. Do they notify *you*, everytime I want a little money?"

"This wasn't a little money, Cora. It was a fairly sizable sum, and I chanced to be in town, yesterday, and met Fred Atkinson at the club, and——"

"He babbled, of course." She laughed, rather bleakly. "And you rushed down here this morning, packed with suspicions. Well, Dick," she continued, looking full into his steel-gray eyes, which always softened when they met hers, "you'll never know what I did with that five thousand. But this I'll tell you, on my word of honor as a gentlewoman:"

"Well?" he said, as she paused.

Julian Borland not only never saw a dime of it, but never knew that I'd had it sent me. There; do you believe this?"

"I'd despise myself if I didn't, Cora," he said, humbly.

She put out her hand, which he took. "Good day," she said, drawing the hand away in a trice. "Now go, Dick. Your suspicion has evaporated. Leave me in peace, please. When I want you I'll send for you—that is, if I ever do want you. Meanwhile, return to your farm at Prendergastville, and grow your potatoes, onions, cabbages, there—or whatever it is that you do grow."

"Cora!"

He sprang toward her as she once more turned away. "That fellow's offended you!" he cried. "Only tell me what he's done and I'll—I'll break his head."

He had caught one of her hands in both his own. His intense ardor, the evidence of his profound, inalienable passion, flowing out fiery, as it did, from a nature that she had always thought so prosaic and ordinary, now

for the first time impressed, even awed her.

Nevertheless, with a sort of weary fierceness, she flung back at him:

"If you could and did break his head, as you put it, you'd be breaking a head worth fifty of your own!"

He released her hand. She watched him, as he stood before her, now, big and virile and sturdy, with a drooping, repentant air.

"Forgive me, Cora! I only meant—" Then he stopped. The mockery in her eyes dashed him for an instant. Then, with determined vehemence, he swept on:

"Cora, I've loved you for a good while, young as you are, young as we both are! I'm not going to stop loving you—do you understand? I'm not going to stop till I get you for my own!"

Some change of mood in her—some responsive thrill of the sort that devoted and un baffled love has often the power to wake in even the most indifferent of us, whether man or woman, made her search his face, now, and grasp his arm, and say with an outburst of tenderness, earnestness and confidence:

"Dick, I'm going to tell you *everything*. There; let me slip my arm in yours, like this. Now we'll walk along together, in the most commonplace style, won't we, just as if we were two stragglers from one of those horrible clam-bakes and picnics that occasionally infest this persecuted coast."

"All right, Cora, (they had begun

their walk) but before you say another word, I've a question to ask you."

"I know what it is, Dick. I know what it is. You've asked it so often."

"Well, I'll ask you again, Cora, will you marry me?"

"And will you, Dick, please listen to the lot of things I've made up my mind to tell you?"

"Not till you answer yes or no."

"But if I answered 'yes,' *you* might say 'no' after you'd heard all the ghastly confession I intend making."

"I'll risk it," said Dick, grimly, and with a mighty obstinacy. "No matter what you've done or tried to do, no matter what dark depths of crime or depravity you've plunged into—"

"Richard Prendergast!"

"Don't try to spoil my sentence by seeking to wrench your arm away from mine. I've got it; you gave it to me, and I mean to keep it. Now, Cora Van Voorhis, before you begin your diabolical confession, will you or will you not be my wife?"

"Well—perhaps—some day."

Dick gave a long, triumphant, flute-like whistle, which the musical clash of the neighboring waves seemed delicately to echo.

"Whew, Cora! *That* sounds hopeful! I've never got anything out of you half so encouraging before. Well, fire away with your confession, as you call it. You've braced me up for the most blood-curdling disclosures!"

Edgar Fawcett.

THE LOVES OF REBECCA AND BASIL.

A LEGEND OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH.

IT was the feast day of St. Ignatius. The streets of Magnesia were thronged, for the festival was to be graced by the reverend presence of Basil, patriarch of the province.

At the appointed hour the stately procession of the Church's ministers moved in solemn pomp through the broad way that divided the city. It was a goodly sight, that long line of worshippers, each clad in pure linen, symbol of holiness. And as they moved they chanted in grave and sonorous cadence a hymn of praise to God for the virtues of the blessed saint they honored, who in his life had written to them dear words of love and counsel.

In the place of honor walked the patriarch Basil, a man of venerable age yet robust, with all the vigor that a holy life had left undrained. His eyes were raised to heaven, and the white abundance of his beard trembled on his bosom as his lips murmured words of love for the vision that by faith he saw in the arch of azure. The kneeling throngs signed themselves with the mark of the cross incessantly, gazing in eager veneration upon the pure and illumined face of Basil.

Rebecca the Jewess, fairest of the Hebrew maidens of Magnesia, leaned from her casement, her eyes flashing scornfully upon the kneeling crowd—"worshippers of a dead man." The fire of poppies flamed in her lips; her eyes seemed to mirror the hot splendors of the Southern sun; the beauty of her face's heroines seemed born anew, essenced in her perfect loveliness. Her contemptuous eyes fell on Basil the patriarch.

Basil's thoughts were drawn from heaven to earth by a pebble on which he stumbled. When again he raised his eyes they paused, by a devil's chance,

at the open lattice of Rebecca the Jewess.

While his soul's chords yet quivered in the soft harmonies that the breath of heaven had thrilled, those strings began again to vibrate—moved to a melody of passion by the pulsing rays that shone from a maiden's eyes. Basil was motionless. His gaze was bound to the face of Rebecca the Jewess. Heaven and earth were no more to him. There was naught but that one face, the face of the Hebrew virgin, with the fire of poppies in her lips and the light of the Southern sun mirrored in her eyes.

A mighty longing grew upon him, a longing to kiss the red lips of that Jewish girl, a longing to look into those eyes forever.

The space between Basil and those who went before him grew wider. Yet he moved not. Those behind him had paused when he paused; they waited patiently until he should renew his steps. Now they become curious—even alarmed. Why does the reverend father tarry? And now they observe his steadfast gaze. Their eyes follow the eyes of Basil. They behold the girl Rebecca looking down upon them, her lips parted in a smile of mockery. A certain dull fear creeps within their hearts and there remains.

Those who go before have become aware of some delay. They too pause and stare behind them. They too see the girl Rebecca gazing contemptuously on Basil the patriarch, whose eyes never leave her face. The kneeling multitude grows weary, wondering at the delay.

In the synagogue of Beth-El the rabbis are intoning the ancient words that are to bind together forever a man and a woman. The two who are

to wed stand before the congregation in the presence of the Jewish ministers. The woman is young, of a perfect beauty, but with a cold carelessness, it seems, of him who is beside her. And that man who stands there, about to take upon him the vows of love and allegiance to the lovely maiden, is one of venerable appearance but of vigorous life. His beard of silver lies low on his breast, but his port and mien are those of hardy vigor. His eyes rest in a passion of adoration on the fair, cold face beside him.

In the monastery on the distant mountain the monks are prostrate on the stones before the altar. They are praying for the patriarch Basil, whom Satan has bound; Basil, who has renounced his Christ, who has plucked his Saviour's image from his heart, that he might shrine in its stead the earthly beauty of Rebecca, the Jewish maiden; Basil, who even at this moment, apostate from his Lord Jesus, proselyte of Israel, stands in the synagogue to give his vows to her who, by her religion, hates the Man of Nazareth. The aged master of the monks voices their common prayer:

"O God, merciful Father, who by thy dear Son Jesus hath overcome the power of the enemy, send thy Holy Spirit upon thy servant Basil, that the scales of sin's blindness may fall from his eyes, and he may behold again the hideousness of Satan and thy loveliness, O gracious Father. We beseech thee to restore Basil for the sake of thy Son, who died for us, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Again and again the prayer was murmured by the kneeling devotees, while their anxious longing sought to search in the mind of God for hope of comfort to their misery.

"Dost thou renounce the Man of Nazareth?"

The rabbi's voice rang out in solemn tones through the synagogue.

Basil made no movement nor an-

swered, only his eyes moved caressingly over the girl's face.

"Dost thou renounce the Man of Nazareth?"

At the second speaking of the fateful question the eyes of Basil quivered, then moved slowly from the maiden's face to the ground and rested there.

"Dost thou renounce the Man of Nazareth?"

Swiftly the eyes were raised and seemed to look through the domed roof into the farthest heaven, while in the clear tone of steadfast resolution Basil answered:

"No!"

In the convent the kneeling monks murmured amen to their aged master's prayer. At the word a sacred joy fell upon them. Peace filled their hearts. They knew that the ear of God had been opened to their supplication.

As the patriarch Basil walked in a quiet street toward his home his heart was full of joy and anguish mingled—joy in his Saviour whom again he bore within his breast, anguish at the memory of a lovely, startled face, that face he loved so well, that face he could look upon no more.

Then as he walked slowly, his soul disturbed by many passions, there came a soft step beside him, a fair hand stole within his, and twain of lips that held the fire of flaming poppies murmured to his ear:

"I love thee now. I love thy Master, the Christ. Wilt thou yet marry me?"

And the eyes of Basil looked into the eyes of Rebecca, those eyes in which were mirrored the love-lights of the sun. Then with one accord they knelt there in the quiet street, thanking God for his mercy.

In the monastery on the distant mountain the monks knelt in praise for the loving-kindness of God, yielding unto him grateful thanks for his grace given to the souls of Rebecca and Basil.

Marvin Dana.

THE WILL OF SEPTIMA OGDEN.

THE family feared the worst. They never counted on Octavia's son circumventing them, and it looked as though such was to be the case now. Why, Octavia had injured Septima as only one sister can injure another, and here, after all these years of estrangement, Septima had apparently grown soft and forgiven everything. Lavinia said she shouldn't wonder if it were incipient madness in Septima; Antonia being the sentimental one of the family thought that maybe it was the likeness of Octavia's son to his father. Lavinia informed Antonia that she had always been a fool, and went to see Septima.

Septima received her in the stiff parlor. The family thought Septima's parlor "grand." It had a set of red velvet furniture in it; in the center of the room was a mottled marble-topped table holding a photograph album and an iron lemon in the nature of a paper weight. A brussels carpet was on the floor. On the mantle were a china shepherd and shepherdess in uncomfortable dancing attitudes. In the corner was the old piano on which Septima and Octavia used to play in their father's house.

Septima knew what was coming as soon as she saw Lavinia, "How good you are, Lav," she said in that manner of hers which rendered the family helpless. "I've escaped the hay-fever this year. My teeth don't ache. My bunion is about as usual. My hair is not in need of your delightful sage tea. Anything else?"

Lavinia smiled and gulped. "I thought," she said, "I'd come just to quiet Antonia, you know what a fool Antonia is. She and Lavinia became heroic, would have it that you took in Octavia's son because—well, because—" Lavinia could not get on very well despite her consideration for Antonia.

"Because," helped out Septima, "he is a poor artist, a cripple on crutches,

and has no home and is down with typhoid fever. Is that it?"

Lavinia's eyes gleamed. She saw that Septima feared the very accusation Antonia had made, and she recognized her chance to put a spoke in Antonia's wheel. "Of course," she said, "Antonia may have thought all that; but she didn't say so."

"Naturally," responded Septima, "we never tell our thoughts. Speech is given us to conceal them. So we'll give Antonia all benefits. If she said I took in Austin Barrett because he resembles his dead father she never thought it."

Lavinia caught her breath. She did not see her way to go on. "Septima," she said, confusedly, "if I can be of any help—you never liked sickness. If you want I should do anything, I will. I can't though, forgive Octavia, even if she's dead. She might have been kinder to you."

"How?"

"Well, long ago."

"You mean that she took John Barrett from me and married him herself? Yes, you used to talk that way, you and Antonia. No, Lav, I don't believe you can be of any use. Austin Barrett is doing fairly. The doctor says he may get well and probably live to be an old man. You know our family live to be very old. Octavia was the exception. But then Octavia never did what was expected of her. How is Beulah?"

Lavinia sighed that her daughter was very well.

"That's clever," said Septima. "Now trot along, Lav; I must go up to the sick room."

Lavinia nor any of the family gain. Said Septima, so she went away.

But Septima Ogden did not go to the sick room at once. She sat in deep thought. She could well understand the talk of the family and how they raked up her old love affair with John Barrett, who had jilted her, in

favor of her sister Octavia. It did more than amuse her, for she did not deny that they were right in their surmises as to the main reason of her taking in the son of John and Octavia. By accident she heard a week ago that he was in the neighborhood and ill. She at once imagined what the family would say—that she would be as pleased to hear of his distress as she had been when they had told her that Octavia's son had been born lame. It struck her that here was her chance to prevent the family reasoning. She had grown tired of their friendliness, which had developed ten years ago, when tin was discovered on a bit of land she had bought, and she was hailed as a rich woman.

She went to the house where her nephew had come to lodge while he sketched in his mother's old neighborhood. She knew how the family talked, how they regarded her as a woman who had not been able to hold the man she loved. She had the patient taken at once to her house: "His mother was my favorite sister," she said. "He ought to be in the bosom of his family."

When he had been under her care a day, a rage took possession of her. All the emptiness of her life appealed to her, her sisters' criticism, Octavia's falsity. "Nothing has ever loved me," she said. "No one loved me when I was young; now I am old it is my money. I am tired of old phases of deception. Suppose I discover a new one, in this young man."

She was anxious that the sick man should live, that she might discover a new phase of deception in the son of dead John and Octavia.

A few days strengthened all this in her, and she had something new to live for. She was thankful that she had money; she knew how the family loved money, and with her wealth she could watch the development of the deception she meant to discover in Austin Barrett. Lavinia's Beulah never crossed her, Antonia's Tom was obsequiously anxious. Here was a new type, and she would conquer this, too.

She thought it over for the hundredth

time as she sat in the red velvet chair after Lavinia had left her, and before going up to the son of Octavia and John Barrett. Austin—John—Octavia, a strange trinity for her to work on. Austin—John—Octavia! And it was to be her deception now, not theirs.

In the meantime Lavinia had gone to Antonia.

"We must be careful," she said. "She knows just what you think."

"You thought the same, Lavinia," retorted Antonia, "You needn't put it all on me."

"I didn't say I did, did I?" inquired Lavinia. "I'll take my share," and went home.

Beulah looked up as her mother entered the kitchen.

"Well," she said, "how is it?"

"He'll get every cent of her money," her mother replied with decision. "Now you've got to do your part."

"My part!" echoed Beulah.

"Wait!" laconically said Lavinia. She would wait to see if Austin Barrett got well; then Beulah would come in. For nothing would have dissuaded Lavinia from the belief that Septima meant to make Octavia's son her heir.

So thought Antonia. She waited till Tom came home from the store, when she laid the matter before him.

"I'm tired of it all," he snapped. "I don't want her money. She's ruled you all too long. I'm sick of it."

Never before had he so expressed himself. When he had gone back to the store Antonia went to Septima.

"I shouldn't wonder," she said, "if Tom is sickening for the typhoid. He acted so queer, ill natured, and that."

"It's very likely typhoid," assented Septima. She liked to make her family comfortable.

Antonia fidgetted.

"I suppose," she said, "you wouldn't care for me to see Austin Barrett."

Septima beamed.

"Why not?" she said. "Come!" She knew that Antonia had expected a refusal.

She led the way to the sick room. Together they looked down at the troubled face on the pillow. Antonia's

eyes hardened—she looked so much like his father she feared the worst. She caught Septima looking at her.

"I can't help it," she said. "John Barrett treated you so badly."

Septima laughed and went away from the bed. They went down to the red velvet parlor. Lavinia was there. Antonia glared.

"I thought," said Lavinia defiantly, "I'd come and inquire again. Beulah's very anxious."

"So's Tom," said Antonia.

Septima laughed.

"How good they both are," she said.

"You know, Septima," Antonia advanced, "my Tom would sit up of nights if you wanted. He's tired after clerking in the store all day, but he wouldn't mind it a bit."

"I know," said Septima, "and Beulah, Lavinia?"

"Oh, Beulah," returned Lavinia, a little flushed, "Beulah doesn't have to offer things, she knows you know her and her willingness to do anything you put a name to."

"Dear girl!" said Septima. Then as by inspiration, "Lav, wouldn't you like to see him? Antonia's been."

"I should," answered Lavinia with alacrity.

As before, Septima led the way to the sick room. She watched Lavinia.

"Septima," said Lavinia, "I pity him. He can't help what his father and mother did."

"Oh no," smiled Septima. "He looks like his father, doesn't he?"

"The image," assented Lavinia, "Beulah's miserable," then she said irrelevantly:

"Maybe it's typhoid," suggested Septima, "Antonia fears Tom is getting it."

Lavinia sniffed.

"Antonia always was a fool," she said, "you know that as well as I do, Septima."

Septima laughed and led the way to the parlor.

"Now girls," she said, "it's like this. That young chap is going to be sick some time."

"If he don't die," put in Antonia.

"He'll live," incisively said Septima.

"Of course he will," Lavinia corroborated. "In typhoid it's all in the nursing,"

"What do you know about it?" demanded Antonia, when Septima raised her hand.

"You have been here," she said. "You have seen your nephew. Now don't come again till he's well. I mean it."

Antonia and Lavinia exchanged looks, but they dared not speak.

"Now go, please," Septima said, getting to her feet.

"Tom 'll stop every day," said Antonia.

Septima nodded.

"Beulah 'll make the beef tea," said Lavinia. "He needn't take it if he don't want to. But Beulah 'll just love to make it."

Septima nodded.

Outside, as they passed down the road, Antonia said:

"Lavinia, mark my words, he'll get every blessed cent."

"Antonia," Lavinia returned, "try not to be such a fool."

Lavinia had it in her mind what to do. They were all well known to one another, they read each other like books, and she knew Antonia was nearly right. They had expected the money would come to Beulah and Tom. Now they knew it was different.

Lavinia was thankful that Antonia's child was a son. As for herself, there was Beulah. Lavinia knew what she should do.

In the several weeks that followed, Beulah blossomed out marvellously. Always an exceedingly pretty girl, the new raiment provided by her mother at great personal sacrifice made her veritably irresistible. Antonia's Tom thought there had never been anything so fair under the sun and told his mother so.

Antonia understood it all. She went to see Lavinia. Beulah was playing the parlor organ; her mother was washing.

"We're only young once," said Lavinia, stripping the suds from her arms. "Let her eat her white bread

as long as she can. Ain't that a pretty tune? It's the 'Maiden's Prayer,' only the organ hasn't enough keys. She plays 'What Is Home Without a Mother' with variations. You'd never know it. Austin's near well, ain't he?"

Austin! Not ever Austin Barrett! Surely Antonia understood Lavinia. "I wonder," she said meaningly, "if Septima's had the old piano tuned?"

Her sister gave her a look. "I'll ask her and let you know," said Lavinia, slapping starch into a dickey of Beulah's. "Maybe Tom would ask; he goes there every day, don't he?"

"Yes," replied Antonia. "He says Septima's dog's just getting fat on Beulah's beef tea."

"Dogs do love beef tea," asserted Lavinia. "Must you go? Wait awhile, Beulah's sure to play the 'Prayer.' No? Good day!"

It may have been two days after this that Beulah taking her beef tea to Septima's house, saw a thin white face in an upper window. She became conscious of herself. The next moment she tripped along looking at the landscape. When she had put the beef tea bottle on the porch she turned away; she never disturbed Aunt Septima by knocking. It had been in her mind to go to her cousin Tom's store for some rose colored ribbon for a new gown she was making, but she decided that it was as well to go along the road in focus of that upper window, and in quite another direction than she should have taken in going to Tom's store. She went home and told her mother how she had seen Austin Barrett at the window.

"Now I'll go for my ribbon," she said.

"Get a couple of yards more than you thought," called out Lavinia. "You might as well have enough. She's beautiful," she added to herself, as she watched her daughter going out at the gate.

So thought Antonia's Tom as he waited on his cousin. Beulah did not think it necessary to tell Tom she had seen the sick man.

But the sick man told his aunt about

a lovely vision who had been down in the road.

"Beulah is pretty," acquiesced Septima.

Strange thoughts had been Septima's as she nursed John Barrett's son into health. Old memories came to her and told her how impotent she had been, and that her will might do as she would now. It had been for just this thing she had taken in her nephew—the idea of revenge for old hurts. His likeness to his father, his crippled condition—we all like whole people—had given her what she wished, a spirit of revenge for the old slight put upon her. She had made up her mind that he should fall in love with Lavinia's daughter, and that Beulah should refuse him. His suffering and helplessness had modified little in her. She owed revenge on all the family. Her sisters had laughed at her long ago, they had toadied to her since she had become rich. She owed it to herself to have the laugh on them and to pit them against each other. She despised Beulah as a toady and Tom as another. Here was a helpless cripple, the son of the man and woman who had wronged her, and he should be the medium of her revenge on the whole of her little world. He should fall in love with Beulah and the girl should jilt him—so much she owed the memory of his father. She knew Beulah, and she knew that if her heart was not touched she would marry no man. And she knew that her heart was touched, though the girl did not know it herself; the child had been taught so long to think of her aunt's money that it had become her dominate idea, as it was Antonia's Tom's. Beulah and Tom! That was it—Beulah and Tom! And Beulah did not know it.

Yes, Beulah was to be loved by Austin Barrett, and Lavinia would be pleased to death, thinking that he would be his aunt's heir; Antonia would be paralyzed, Tom outraged. Then by adroit measures Septima would prove to Beulah that she knew why Austin would be married, for his aunt's money, and would tell as much to Austin Bar-

rett who would accuse the girl of being mercenary. Then Septima would command Beulah to marry him. Beulah would deny her, being wakened by this time to the demands of her own heart, there would be a family mess in which Tom would go to Beulah. Oh, the whole thing was like a play to Septima, its comprehensiveness a sweet morsel in her mouth, especially the rage of her sisters when they knew their children had forfeited her money.

It worked beautifully. She knew why Lavinia over-dressed Beulah.

So when her nephew spoke of the girl who had left the beef tea it was in accord with her plans.

"Yes, she is very pretty," she said. "It is a pity you have not met your family. I believe you never saw this place till a week before your sickness."

"No," he answered; his mother used to talk about the beauty of her old home, and at last he had come to sketch it.

That afternoon Lavinia told Antonia that Beulah had seen Octavia's son.

Antonia considered the embargo down now that the young man was convalescent. She went to Septima. She was very glad Austin Barrett was doing so well.

"I'll stop and tell Lavinia," she said. "She'll be tickled to know. Such a slave as Lavinia is to Beulah. What do you think? She does the washing while Beulah sits and plays the organ. I shouldn't be surprised if Beulah offers to play to her cousin Austin. I told Lavinia maybe you'd get the piano tuned."

"That's an idea," said Septima.

"Do you like piano playing?" she asked her nephew when she went up to him.

"No," he answered without hesitation. "Do you play?"

Septima laughed.

"You're honest at any rate," she said. "I used to play. So did your mother. She played better than I did. I've got one of the music books we used to play from."

"I liked her old tunes," he said.

"Can you play them?"

"No," she said so sharply that he looked up from the sketching board he was trying to handle.

After a while he queried, "Why did you ask me about piano playing?"

"Oh," she answered, "your Aunt Lavinia's daughter plays."

"That pretty girl?" he asked. "I wonder if she can play?"

Septima laughed.

The next day the piano was tuned. The day following Beulah played in the parlor beneath the sick room. She played the "Maiden's Prayer" and "What Is Home Without a Mother," with variations. The artist held his head. Septima went down and set before her niece the old music book.

Beulah played the tunes Barrett's mother had played, and Septima recognized them.

Then Beulah must come up to the convalescent's room.

After that it was just as Septima would have had it, just as she knew it would be.

"He is like his father," she mused, "a beautiful face means everything to him. Octavia was prettier than me."

And the family. Lavinia was in the seventh heaven. Antonia felt that she was doing her duty in telling Septima that Lavinia had planned it all.

"No," said Septima, "I did."

"And you mean him to fall in love with her?" panted Antonia. "And he the son of John Barrett!"

"I believe he asked her this morning to marry him," returned Septima. "I shall make a new will tomorrow; all that I have goes to him and Beulah if they marry, otherwise, it all goes to him."

The last part of the sentence came to her then and there. In a surge of feeling she acknowledged the truth to herself, that she still held to the memory of John Barrett, and not altogether harshly, that she did not hate him.

But, more, she meant to force her family to do as she would, to make them atone for the old criticisms of her. Beulah should be penniless when she asserted herself, as Tom should be, and Lavinia and Antonia should suffer.

But she did not understand herself any more than her sisters understood her. It was reserved for Antonia's Tom to feel that he understood her. When his mother told him what Septima had told her he went to see Beulah.

Beulah looked very beautiful in the rosy ribbons he had sold her a little while back.

"Mother's baking a pound cake for Aunt Septima," she said. "I'm waiting for it. What do you want, Tom?"

"Come into the garden," he said. "Your mother will hear us here."

"Not for long," she answered. "I promised Austin Barrett he might sketch me this afternoon."

In the garden he turned to her as she plucked some cinnamon pinks and threw them away.

"Beulah," he said, "tell me it is not true."

She did not ask him what he meant, but her face went rosier than her ribbons.

"You know what you are to me," he pleaded. "You know it has been my poverty that prevented my speaking before."

"Are you any richer to-day?" she asked. "But I never knew, indeed I did not. And if I had known, what could have come of it? Mother wouldn't have allowed it unless Aunt Septima had consented. And you see now she wouldn't have consented."

"Beulah!" he said. That was all, but his voice abided with Beulah many a day thereafter.

He went at once to his Aunt Septima.

"You are doing a bad thing," he said to her as soon as he saw her. "You know what this family is, money grovellers. We haven't treated you well, for we thought only of your money. You have bought my mother, you have bought Aunt Lavinia, and now you have bought Beulah. I do not say a word against Austin Barrett, but God help him if you have bought him a wife without love. And I? Oh, Aunt Septima, have you not seen what Beulah was to me? She would have

known, but for your money—for you have ruled in everything. You have not done well with your money. But one thing, try to make Beulah love Austin Barrett or you will have done the worst a loveless woman could ever do."

"Loveless!" she screamed at him.

"Loveless! Who are you, to dare say that to me? I tell you you have brought it upon yourself. Love! if you care for Beulah the way you say, you would long ago have told her so if you hadn't a crust in the world; but you didn't care for her as much as the possibility of some day getting my money. And you to accuse me. Tomorrow I make a new will; everything I have goes to Austin Barrett if Beulah refuses to marry him. But she won't. There was another will; I made it when I thought you and Beulah too young to toady. But you to accuse me! Loveless! I loveless!" She repeated the word in a crescendo of anger.

He still heard the word hissed after him as he left the house.

That afternoon Austin Barrett kissed Beulah for the first time.

In the evening Antonia came weeping to Lavinia. Tom had left the store, and had gone to town.

Lavinia smiled. Antonia strode over to her.

"Lavinia," she said, "I never struck you before in my life," and let her hand descend upon her sister's cheek.

Outside the door Beulah heard all that had passed.

"Tom gone!" she said. Tom gone!"

And so it all went as Septima would have it. The new will was made and given into the charge of the legatee. He took it eagerly. He did not care for the money, but he loved Beulah, and he would have her at any price. With humiliation he realized the truth. that he loved her more than she loved him; but he believed that she would yet love him. He was a cripple and a poor artist, but he had a social position, and all women like that in their husbands. He did not believe she cared much for her cousin Tom; Tom had truckled for his aunt's money, and

Beulah certainly would resent such a miserable act. And—but all reasoning dwarfed beside the great fact that he loved her, he loved her, and she had promised to be his wife.

And now Septima should have been pleased, seeing that everything was working her way. But certain things puzzled her. Austin Barrett would go out sketching with Beulah, and they would come home quiet and preoccupied. She wondered what they talked about when they were alone. In the house, in her presence, Beulah would play his mother's old tunes to him and he would sit in the window or in the lamp light and draw. She wondered when the grand coupé would come.

It came in somewhat a different way than that she had expected.

Antonia no longer visited the house, where Lavinia now came every day, smiling and exasperatingly friendly.

It was a day when Barrett went out alone and Beulah sat sewing in one of the red velvet chairs. On the piano against the wall was the sketch of his fiancée which Barrett had made the day she wore the rose colored ribbons.

All at once Beulah threw down her work.

"Aunt Septima," she said, "I am wronging him!"

Her aunt regarded her expectantly, "I mean Cousin Austin," Beulah explained. "I do not love him, and you know it, and so does mother. Would you have me marry a man I do not love? He is worth more than that. I try to deceive him into believing that I care for him, but I do not. He must be told that I cannot marry him." "Yes?" said Septima, "and then?" "Your part in the matter ends there," answered Beulah.

"Exactly," said her aunt, "and you know what it will cost you, this new departure?"

"It will cost me—myself," said Beulah.

There was the sound of crutches in the entry.

"Here he is," said Septima. "Suppose you tell him." She threw open the parlor door. "Austin!" she called.

He stood in the doorway, pale and expectant. Beulah went to him and raised her hand to his shoulder.

"Cousin," she said, "You will forgive me for telling you what I must. I must take back my promise, I cannot be your wife. I have treated you badly, but some day you will thank me."

"You know," he said with dry lips, "what you are to me?"

"I know," she answered hotly, "that you deserve what I cannot give you—my heart. Good bye!"

He watched her going out the door. His face was ghastly. Septima was amused.

"Aunt Septima," he said, "how much of this is your work?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"It was in your own hands," she retorted. "Whose fault is it if you cannot keep what you love?"

There was a fierce pleasure in her soul as she asked him a question which years ago had been in the minds of her world when his father had jilted her.

"Poor woman!" he said.

She heard him going laboriously up the stairs. She heard him packing his things to go.

She sat in the parlor the rest of the day. She sat there when night came. She heard him walking up and down in his room, up and down.

When it was quite black in the parlor there came a whisking of skirts in the entry. "Septima," called a voice, "where are you?" It was Lavinia. She stumbled into the parlor. "Are you here, Septima? Beulah—she is gone. She wrote me a note. She has gone to town after Antonia's Tom. She has run away like Octavia when she married John Barrett."

"Leave me," sharply said Septima.

"But, Septima——"

"Leave me!"

There was no resisting that command. Septima sat there till far into the night. The furniture creaked, the old piano had strange reverberations in it, the branch of a tree tapped at the window.

Suddenly she started to her feet.

"Austin," she whispered, "John—Octavia!" She flew up the stairs. She pounded upon the door at the head. It was opened by her nephew.

"Austin—" she whispered, "John—Octavia!" He led her to a chair. She sat there with her hands falling. Her face was drawn.

"Do not leave me," she said. "Do not go away. I have wronged you. I have wronged your mother and father for years. Love is everything. Only, I have never been loved—I never could hold what I loved. Oh, my money! it has bought nothing for me! It is all yours—it is all yours, John's son—Octavia's son. Octavia was my favorite sister. She was so much prettier than me. It is all yours, my money is; can't it buy for me a little love? Oh, I should have had a child, I should have had a child, I should have had a child—it would have loved me."

It was daylight before she quieted. They said her nursing had been too much for her.

In a couple of weeks she was sufficiently recovered from the "stroke" to resume her old sway. She ordered her sisters from the house. In a further few weeks she limped about her room. Some times she would whisper the three names, "Austin, John, Octavia," and become strangely quiet. Again, she would be vindictive, telling her nephew to have that latest will of hers read, after Lawyer Sloan had read the one he had in which everything was devised to Beulah and Tom.

"And Tom and Beulah are married and very poor," she said. "That is as it should be. And you'll have all I'm worth. You'll be rich. I never meant you harm, though I thought I did. I know what love is, and Tom called me loveless that time."

For weeks she was like this, unsoftened toward her kin who had been ruled by her so long. At the last she turned to her nephew, "Kiss me," she said. "I once kissed your father, and I—I know what love is. Forgive me, everybody,"

Lavinia and Antonia took possession. Tom and Beulah came to the funeral.

Lavinia and Antonia in black veils waited for the lawyer.

"Lavinia," Antonia leaned over to say, "if the will's in favor of Octavia's Austin I'll break it. I'll prove undue influence—I'll prove Septima wan't in her right mind."

"Don't be a fool," returned Lavinia, "If it's in his favor he'll compromise, if only on account of Beulah. But you don't know that Septima ever made such a will."

Lawyer Sloan came with the will he had had in his keeping for years.

Tom turned to the window. Beulah went over to her mother.

Lawyer Sloan read the will—everything went to Tom and Beulah, no mention of any one else.

In the midst of a jabber of voices Barrett left the room. They heard his crutches on the porch.

On the kitchen fire was a spoonful of ashes, all that remained of the will in his favor.

Tom and Beulah were holding hands, their eyes swimming.

As Beulah stood thus with Tom she cast her eyes outside. She did not call Tom's attention to what she saw.

And what she saw was a figure on crutches going along the road. She guessed something of the truth; that provision had been made for him by Aunt Septima, and he refused to avail himself of it at the cost of begging the others. Why?

She did not guess that in his artist traps, slung upon his back, was the sketch of herself that used to stand upon the piano, the sketch he had made of her in the rosy ribbons the day he had kissed her for the first time.

Beulah saw him reach the top of the hill, pause for a moment and look back. The sun flooded him as he stood there, and he looked as though he were bathed in gold. Then he went down the other side, slowly, painfully, and was gone.

"Beulah," said Tom, "what are you thinking of?"

"Of love," she said, turning her eyes to his, "my husband."

The tears were raining down her face.

Robert C. V. Meyers.

THE WRAITH OF ORKNEY.

I WAS tired of boarding and of its daily routine of boarding-house cooking and free fellowship. I knew, or imagined I did each day, just what to-morrow's bill of fare would be, and had learned long since, that no woman's room was her castle in Madam Kittelle's home for select boarders.

Anyhow, my heart was bent upon a change. I had been brought up in the country, and longed to break the fetters of my city imprisonment, and like most young married women, I had fairy ideas of housekeeping, and of wedded bliss in a nest of my own.

My busy brain was at work one morning as I scanned the *Daily Star*. Why, here was just the thing I wanted:

FOR RENT—ORKNEY HALL. NINE MILES FROM
Richmond; fine old mansion; shady lawns, fruit, etc.

I looked no further. I was resolved to see Orkney Hall.

But how? I knew Charlie's aversion to the country, and a man's proneness to throw a damper on first suggestions.

Helen, my niece—piquant, lovely, and fertile of resource—was with me for a few days. She suggested that "Uncle Charlie" should take us driving. We would go out by the old army road that led toward this rural paradise, and trust to luck for the rest.

It was a March morning, keen and cool. Every breath was living elixir. Charlie got us a fine team and we bowled along the turnpike toward the historic Chickahominy.

Ten miles away, as the agent had directed, we neared our destination; and a turn in the road brought us to a pair of double-arched gates, that looked through to a long cedar lane. Sure enough, close by the entrance was a sign-board.

"Oh! auntie," said Nellie, "here is a place for rent. Let's drive in. I had ever a *penchant* for viewing other people's premises."

I looked at Charlie.

"It seems a fine old estate," he assented, as he threw me the lines, and jumped down to open the rusted latch.

The driveway ended in a half circle, and we drew up to a long low house of red brick, with an old-fashioned hip-roof, and five dormer windows blinking in the morning sun.

I followed Nell up the grey stone steps.

"What if a ghost should appear, Auntie," she laughingly whispered, "now that you are here?"

Charlie clanged the brass knocker. As the sound died away we heard a pair of shuffling feet, and the door was opened by an old colored man with knotty hair and beard, white as the locks of Rip Van Winkle.

"You are looking after this property, uncle?" questioned my husband.

"Yes, sah. I is," said the old man, promptly. "Jes' walk right in."

"And what is your name?" Charlie asked, as we entered the wide wainscoted hall.

"George, sah; George Washington."

"Ah, yes," smiled Charlie, "well, Mr. Washington, the ladies would like to look over the house, and a little light and air will do you good."

We "did" the main building, and going up a spiral stairway in an adjacent wing, found ourselves in a large apartment above.

This seemed to have been the guest chamber, and was partially furnished. In one corner stood a tester bedstead, denuded now of curtains or valance, but with its feather bed and bolster covered over with a dimity spread. Some chairs, a table black with the polish of age, and an easy chair before an antique, brass-ringed desk, were suggestive of presence—of whose we could not conjecture.

"This is a fine sleeping room,

George," remarked Charlie, as we gazed about us.

"Yes, sah," said uncle George, "dat is ef you kin sleep, an' keep de kivver-in' on you! But sense the major went from 'bout here dat's hard to do."

"Went!" I asked. "Where?"

"Went to glory, M'am. Leastways dare's where he started. But he were too fund o' de fox-chase and de 'lection barbecues an' sich! So his sperrit am berry restless."

Here Nellie laughed, and Charlie said he guessed "we'd be going before the Major's 'sperrit' overtook us."

We bade the uncle goodbye with a bonus; perfectly charmed with "Orkney Hall," and in no wise dismayed by its "ghost."

After that the way was clear. Charlie forgave us our house-hunting ruse, and became enthused over the delights of country life, and before the snowdrops peeped above the ground, we were settled in our new home.

The spacious dining room at Orkney Hall had never looked cheerier or more home-like in the heyday of its aristocracy, than on one April morning, when Charlie kissed me goodbye for the day, and I watched him disappear through the laurel copse to catch the 8.30 train.

Aunt Hannah, Uncle George's wife, busied herself among the breakfast things, moving softly in and out until I heard a little clash. "De lawd, Mis' Nan!" she said, "dèy's goin' to be a weddin' in dis house 'fore de year is out! I dunno when I seed two spoons in one cup befoh! I 'clar it gin me a start!"

"And well it might, Aunt Hannah," I laughed, turning back again to the window, "when we are all old married people, and no one for a bride or groom."

The sun streaming in, threw quivering shafts of gold upon the oaken panels and high carved mantel—outside it was a glare upon the gravel walks. The restless, singing birds stirred my heart in unison. I stepped from the low window to the ground.

Ah! there was my morning visitor—

a mocking bird who gave free concerts in an old elm at the corner of the house. I went lightly up to the tree, and whistled my aria back. We had finished a shrill duet—the happy bird and I—when from my raised head, I met the gaze of a gentleman on horse-back, just entering the driveway.

Seeing my startled look he dismounted with easy grace, and advanced. "Have I the honor of addressing Mrs. Moreton?" he inquired, standing there in the full sunlight, with his bridle over his arm.

"Yes," said I, "that is my name."

"And mine is Faulkner," he replied.

I knew in a flash! Landon Faulkner! I had much ado to keep back my nervous curiosity, as old George came up and took his horse, and we passed on to the house.

The neighborhood of Orkney Hall was rather exclusive, and I had not many callers; but the story of Landon Faulkner's wealth, of his brilliant wife and unhappy marriage, were common topics.

This was his home, inherited from his uncle, the old major with the "restless sperrit." Here that brief and stormy wedded life had been lived, and, as usual, when we rented the property, a little of the family history had been delivered with the keys.

There had been a separation. The gay wife had gone with friends over to Europe, whence news of her tragic death by drowning came back the year after; and Landon Faulkner was supposed to be a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

But all this happened five years, or more, ago, yet here he was now,—self-possessed and a little haughty,—but with no trace of his past about him, save perhaps a disdainful look of self-pity in his dark eyes.

Commonplace conventionalities were at fault this morning. I could think of nothing to say. I told him how sorry I was that Charlie had just gone, and he said he had come down from Richmond to look over the place before leaving the country for an indefinite time.

Some other little talk there was about the flowers, and the old servants, and then he bowed himself out—with deferential politeness—through the eastern porch. I took a woman's critical survey of his faultless dress and bearing, as he joined uncle George on the lawn, and they went away together.

I quite understood that Mr. Faulkner had gone, when—perhaps two hours later—I heard a footstep and saw him come down the broad stairway and pass out at the front entrance. He did not turn his head and was paler, I thought, than when I had seen him earlier in the day. I was puzzled. My room opened on the hall, and I certainly had not seen him enter. How had he gotten up stairs, and for what? I confess I felt relieved when he mounted his horse, and galloped down the cedar lane.

I had much to tell Charlie that evening, and we each agreed that the wraith of Landon Faulkner's dead hopes, was the most tangible "ghost" we had yet encountered.

The summer sped swiftly—brilliant, warm, and filled with all country sweets. Orkney Hall was looking its loveliest, surrounded with a green girdle of oaks, and set off by velvety lawns and rose-gardens.

Helen, my niece, had been with us for a month, and was charmed with the ideal home she had helped me to discover.

Nothing marred our perfect enjoyment, until one day Nellie declared she had resurrected the Major's "ghost" in the old wing. The wing had been reserved by the agent, when we took possession. There was no door communicating with the main building, and the only entrance was by the spiral stairway on the outside. But Nellie's room adjoined it on this side of the house.

One morning she came down stairs in a tremor. "Auntie," she said, when Charlie had gone, "Auntie, there is surely something wrong about that room in the old wing. I heard—"

"Oh! rats!" I said, and then we

both laughed. "I don't mean slang, Nellie, but real, live rats!"

"No, no, Auntie—rats couldn't walk with a slow step up and down. It was very late you know," she continued, "when Ned Brannon and the girls left last night, and we had been talking about the dark tales they tell of Orkney; and I guess I was a little nervous. Late as it was, I so wanted to finish 'Thelma,' that I had been reading perhaps an hour, when I heard it—pacing up and down the old Major's room."

"Now, Nellie," I remonstrated, "that is not possible. It was not only rats, but nerves. Charlie would never have done teasing if he got hold of this."

"O, then," she cried, really very much distressed, "don't tell him! But I know I heard it, and I saw——"

"Heavens! You saw—why, this is worse and worse!"

"Yes, I *saw*," she insisted stubbornly. "A rat couldn't make the shadow of a man out on the grass!"

"Neither could a ghost," I argued, "because they don't have shadows. It's only your imagination, Nellie, and keeping such uncanny hours, when you should be abed."

And I gave no serious thought to Nellie's ghost. As a young housekeeper there were plenty of live things to occupy my waking moments. A few friends came down to visit us before the glory of the summer time was past, and on one of the last and hottest days of August we gave a garden party.

The best county people were invited. Girls in pretty light costumes made picturesque groups—none of them more beautiful than Helen, in a soft, clinging dress of creamy silk, with scarlet poppies at her breast, and a wreath of those vivid flowers in her garden hat.

The trees were hung with gay lanterns. At night they were to be illuminated, and a dance held indoors. It was just as the sunset paled, when the warm hues of twilight softened the landscape, that a lull came in the merriment. I sat near one of the little pink and white tables, where I had been

dispensing ices, and Charlie lounged on a seat near by, when Uncle George brought him a letter.

"Great Scott!" he said, jumping up with the open note, and leaning over my chair, "Nan, whom do you think will be our guest to-night?"

"Self-invited?" I asked. Charlie had fussy ways over nothing, and I was not a bit curious. "I am tired out," I said, "I do hope I can rest awhile before the others come. But who is _____"

Here some one called Charlie away, and a group of young people came up with Nellie, begging her for a song.

Music poured from Nellie's lips as from a nightingale's throat. She touched her guitar in a minor prelude, and her voice rang out—deep, liquid and tender—and stilled every other sound.

I leaned back, thrilled as I ever was at Nellie's singing. I was directly opposite the windows of the wing—the limb of the giant oak above my chair touching the narrow window panes. Was it my fancy that as Nellie's song arose, a form darkened the window for one fleeting moment? Was I growing nervous also? I brushed my hands across my eyes and looked again. Yes, surely for one swift flash a human figure outlined itself in the fading light, and then fell back in the shadowy embrasure. I was bewildered—a little frightened. The chattering crowd about me broke the spell.

"Love songs are always sad," Sadie Winston was saying.

"Yes, and suggestive of broken hearts," said Ned Brannon, with a half smile at Nellie.

"And blighted lives—and early graves," chirped another young cynic.

"Whew! You make me think of ghosts—and oh, I tell you!" cried the madcap belle of the neighborhood, "Mrs. Moreton has a ghost—right here at Orkney!"

And I never knew how it came about, but they were all pleading at once.

"Dear Mrs. Moreton, *do* let us explore the haunted wing?"

"It is just the witching hour," said

Sadie, "and indeed, indeed, we will not trouble a thing!"

I tried to expostulate, when even Nellie joined in. "Do let us go, auntie; in numbers there is strength. And we'll scare the rats anyhow!"

"But we have no key," I urged. "The stairway door has never been unlocked."

"Perhaps another key would fit it." some one suggested.

"There's a bunch of door keys on the closet shelf in the upper hall," I told Nellie. "But you had better see George—"

"Oh! Bother George!" I heard, as they all ran, pell-mell, to the house.

I walked away to look for Charlie, not sorry to be rid of them; and had but just reached the rose-walk when a tall and stately form approached me. I knew well the easy grace and bearing—yet hardly restrained my surprise when Landon Faulkner greeted me, as if I had seen him but yesterday. Charlie spied us, and coming up extended his hand in his hearty way, "I received your note, Mr. Faulkner," he said, "and bid you welcome. I am sure we are all glad to have you back at Orkney."

Charlie was in the midst of these wordy hospitalities, when "Hallo!" he exclaimed all at once, "what is the matter over there?" and put out for the house. The servants were running here and there, and some of the guests had gathered in commotion at the front door. Fearing some terrible catastrophe, Mr. Faulkner and I also quickened our steps.

We picked up Sadie Winston, limp and terror-stricken, from the porch floor. "What is it—what *has* happened?" I asked hurriedly.

"Oh, the ghost! The ghost!" she blurted out. "We have seen the ghost! Look for Nellie—Nellie has fainted!"

I made a wild rush past her and found Nellie, her face and hair deluged with water, reviving under the ministrations of Mr. Brannon.

"Auntie," she cried, seeing me, "I told you so! We saw it—we all saw it! I went up stairs for the keys, you

know, and *there it was*—tall and dark! It just walked right before us," here Nellie shivered from head to foot, "and vanished through the wall."

I was terribly unstrung; not the less so, remembering my own vision at the window. Before I could speak, however, a hand touched mine, and a calm voice fell like oil upon these troubled waters:

"My dear madam," said Landon Faulkner, "let me explain. It was I. Assure your niece," with a deprecatory glance at Nellie, who blushed before his ardent gaze, "that I deeply regret this—but it was only I—myself—whom she saw!"

"You! Mr. Faulkner?" I questioned, impatiently, "why, how came you up stairs?"

"I went straight up to my room when I arrived," he said coldly, "I came in by the eastern porch."

"The eastern porch!" I repeated like a parrot, and my mind flashed back to that day in Spring. "But you can't reach the wing from the eastern porch," for I well knew what room he meant.

"Oh, yes, there is a door in the short hall just by the closet. I should have thought you knew. No!" he smiled at my sudden start, "it is not exactly a secret door; only built in like the other panels, and fastened with a spring."

"And were you in your room before—when Nellie was singing?"

"Yes, half an hour," he replied.

Grave and courtly he had acknowledged my hasty introduction to Nellie, and a sudden pathetic sweetness crossed his face now.

"I saw the young ladies from the hall window when they entered," he said, laughing slightly at the recollection, "and thought it might embarrass them to meet a stranger, so I returned and came out by the spiral stairway."

I breathed freer.

"And there is no ghost at all," said that silly Sadie Winston.

"Yes," he answered dryly, "several of them."

It was the only allusion Landon Faulkner ever made to his miserable past. He had not gone abroad as he had intended. More than once he had busied himself among his papers in the old major's room—not shunning society, nor seeking it—but simply coming and going at will, with no thought of our foolish trepidation about the "ghost."

And when he saw Nellie, in her purity and beauty, flitting about his desolate home, he was moved with a feverish yearning to come back into the world and trust to love once more.

Our garden fête ended brilliantly, and was only one of many pleasures that summer, and when the full year was rounding to a close, there was a wedding—just as Aunt Hannah had predicted—and the "ghost" of Orkney Hall was laid forever.

Inda Barton Hays.



UNDER THE LOCUSTS.

AH! it is so long ago, but surely you have not forgotten it. We had been down in the wood-lot, where the trees were so large and tall and dense.

What a long delicious afternoon that had been, as we rambled up and down the hills, swung ourselves down the steep banks by means of the hazel bushes, and "dared" to walk the fallen tree that lay across the stream. We had watched the busy squirrels and the idle lizards basking in the warm sun of the Indian summer; had peeped into the homes of the hurrying ants, and tried the call of the mysterious "doodles." We had looked for the blue on the wild grape's clusters and the brown on the hazel's husk.

We had gathered the first yellowed maple leaves and a few crimson sprays from the gum; and you, I know, had found some whitened ferns and trailing vines of the greenbriar.

But the day drew near to its close and we turned our faces homeward.

Have you forgotten how the village looked from the end of the green lane next the wood? The windows glowed like molten gold in the sunlight, while the shadows lay heavy over the fields. How peaceful our own home looked—the white house shaded by the locust trees. How white the fence shone against the green of the grass, and how the light curtains swayed at the windows.

At the gate we paused to look at the sunset. How dark the woods appeared against the crimson and gold of the

sky, and we shuddered to think that but a few minutes previous we had been in their lonely depths. But as the light paled, a soft haze drew its delicate curtain over the nodding forest and hid the gloom of its darkness.

Do you remember how we listened to the coming breeze, murmuring through the branches of the slumbering trees, bending the tall grasses in the meadow, coming nearer and nearer until it lifted the hair on our warm foreheads, sent down a golden shower of leaves from the locust trees above us, shook the perfume from the madeira blossoms and swept softly through the windows of the old house?

Then we listened to the hum of insects around us, the distant song of the whippoorwill in the valley before us, the shout and song in the village behind us, the thousand voices of the summer night; until the new moon sailed her silver boat in the waveless sea above us, and the fire-flies vied with the stars in brilliancy.

Marie Nantz.



VENETIAN VISTAS.

a quarter of an hour, where we enjoyed the magnificence of the two *carabinieri* who paced the station platform (twin brothers apparently to the two we had left at the station in Padua earlier in the day, and of the same family as the pair we saw at Florence the week before), the train approached the seashore, and as it pulled slowly across the long bridge which to-day links the city of Venice with the mainland, the Queen of the Adriatic came into view, beautiful as Venus rising from the deep to our longing eyes.

The first impression was that of a city partly submerged, for cities built in the sea are not often approached by train; but the beauty of it all was so far in excess of our expectations that I can but envy those who have still in prospect the delight of a first view of Venice.

A few hay-boats and fisher-craft were slowly making their ways through the lagoons, long lines of stakes marking the channels. The sea was perfectly smooth, reflecting the opal-tinted sky, and at the meeting-point of water and vapor, bathed in the golden sunshine, hung the towers and domes of Venice.

I have rarely left a train with greater satisfaction than on that occasion, and while it had brought us safely and with reasonable expedition, even for an Italian railway, to our destination, it seemed so entirely out of harmony with the surroundings that for the moment I resented the existence of all the locomotives and rapid-transit schemes on earth. As we left the station, congratulating ourselves on being free from the age of steam for a few days at least, coming out on the Grand Canal, upon which the station

FROM the windows of the railway carriage we eagerly watched for the first sight of Venice. On either hand the flat plains of Lombardy stretched away until the distant horizon was still dotted with those great poplars which seemingly filed in stately procession past the train. The vines hung in swinging garlands from tree to tree, and long straight ditches which apparently extended illimitable distances in both directions but slightly varied the monotony of the vast rice-fields which bordered our way.

We had read our Baedeker and endeavored to cram the history of that wonderful Venetian Republic into our already overstocked brains, and compared hotels and the prices thereof with the impartial judgment of those whose funds are the measure of a European trip, studied the map and decided to go to the Hotel de Monaco.

Not that the name, suggestive of high play, offered us inducements for retrieving our expended funds, but the guide-book gave it the star indicative of respectability at a reasonable price, and besides it was situated on the Grand Canal within easy walking distance of the Piazza San Marco.

At last, having halted at Mestre for

faces, a saucy little steamer with tooting whistle and churning screw was among the first craft which met our gaze.

This was a disappointment, but a few minutes later we were lying on the cushions of a gondola, gliding through narrow by-canals, under arched bridges

and, as far as surroundings were concerned, in another age.

The entire business of transporting persons and goods in Venice is by water, for the simple reason that the streets are

canals, separating the city into irregular islands. It is possible to walk from one end of the city to the other through narrow alleys and over bridges, and there are a few reasonably wide streets, but there are neither cabs, wagons nor horses, for there is nowhere to use them.

We passed many large boats, capable of carrying from five to ten tons of merchandise, which have neither decks nor sails but are propelled by long poles in the narrow water-ways and by oars through the wider canals.

The principal entrances to palaces and houses are along their water-fronts, and private gondolas, with the oarsmen dressed in the livery of the family, are to be seen lying at the steps instead of a carriage and pair.

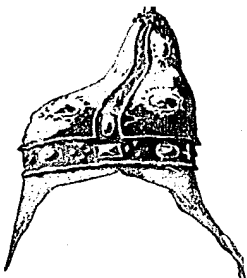
We met several gondolas carrying departing tourists to the outgoing train, the nationality of some of the travelers being easily recognizable by their baggage piled before them in the boats; the Englishman's litter of leather luggage, rugs and walking-sticks contrasting with the American's orderly array of trunk and hand-bag.

The Hotel de Monaco proved equal to our expectations as to location, although it sheltered us only during waking hours. One never tires of the delights of out-of-door life in this strange city, and as for work, although we were prepared for quantities of sketching, who would dabble in pigments when the rarest colors of nature and art were spread before him, and who labor when he has but to lift a finger to be carried off for a lotus-eating voyage through canal and lagoon?

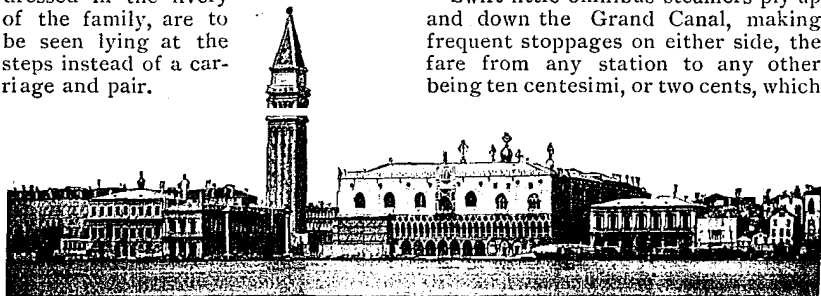
The Grand Canal, which runs, if anything may properly be described as running in Venice, in a serpentine course through the city, is bordered on either side by palaces nearly its entire length.

These were formerly the residences of wealthy and powerful nobles and merchants, but most of them are now falling to decay or used as warehouses, and one receives a melancholy impression from these crumbling mansions and the greater ruin which has come upon the families which, once rulers of the Mediterranean and arbiters of nations, are now extinct or sunk into poverty and forgotten.

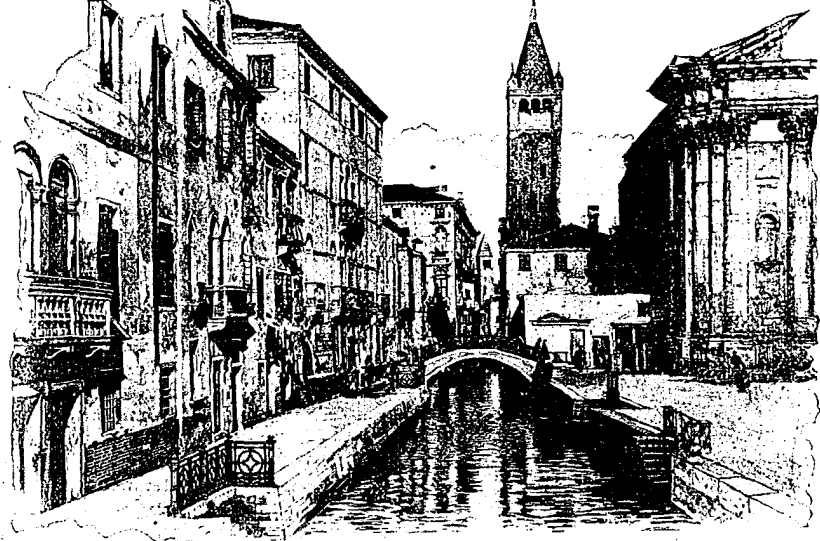
Swift little omnibus steamers ply up and down the Grand Canal, making frequent stoppages on either side, the fare from any station to any other being ten centesimi, or two cents, which



A DOGE'S CAP.



THE CAMPANILE AND DUCAL PALACE.



RIVA SAN BARNABO.

reasonable rate is advanced fifty per cent. on Sundays and other holidays. The gondoliers resented this innovation, but even their sturdy natures could not withstand the march of progress, and while they still possess a monopoly of passenger-carrying, except on the Grand Canal, they lose no opportunity of anathematizing their swift unpicturesque rivals.

Three bridges cross the canal—the Rialto, a splendid stone-arched bridge with a single span, and two modern iron bridges which are as hideous as only certain types of iron bridges can be.

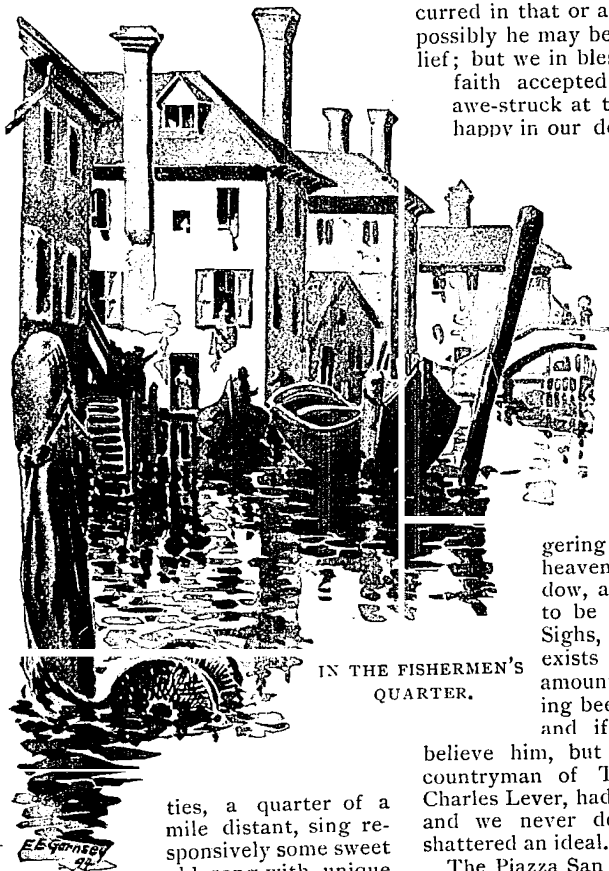
It was delightful to take one of the little steamers in the late afternoon and go down to the Giardino Publico at the extreme easterly end of Venice, and after a stroll through the park and perhaps a cup of coffee at the kiosk there, to sail back to the city at sunset when the whole scene was glowing with color. The towers and domes of the city and the vessels in the harbor seemed to

float in a golden mist, the sky flamed crimson and purple, and the whole composition mirrored in the sea was indescribably beautiful.

In the evening two or three large boats, decorated with Chinese lanterns and carrying parties of singers and musicians, drift up and down the Grand Canal, making night musical with old Venetian and Neapolitan songs.

Pleasure-seekers in other gondolas join company with these troubadours until a flotilla of a score or two is formed, and with mellow voices and tinkling mandolins they slowly glide along, welcoming a newly arrived ship with colored fire or serenading the guests at the various hotels along the canal. At the close of a chorus one of the musicians with hat in hand steps from boat to boat soliciting contributions, and the auditors are not niggardly in rewarding these amphibious musical itinerants.

Some of the singers have remarkably good voices, and occasionally two par-



IN THE FISHERMEN'S
QUARTER.

ties, a quarter of a mile distant, sing responsively some sweet old song with unique and charming effect.

It needs but little imagination to fancy one's self back in the romantic age when young gallants serenaded their innamoratas beneath these same balconies, and as the gondolas glide silently past the house of Desdemona, one listens, almost expecting to hear some ghostly echo of the tragedy which was enacted behind those barred windows centuries ago.

Of course, the nineteenth-century idiot, who prides himself on his practicality and sound common-sense, will insist on telling you that it is clearly impossible, for any number of reasons, that such an absurd affair ever oc-

curred in that or any other house, and possibly he may be happy in his unbelief; but we in blessed, unquestioning faith accepted the legend, gazed awe-struck at the house and were happy in our delusion. The same

unimaginative gentleman will also cite history and incontrovertible proofs that the Bridge of Sighs was not crossed by the unhappy prisoner on his way to the damp dungeons across the canal from the Ducal Palace; that the aforesaid condemned did not cast one last lin-

gering glance at the blue heavens through that window, and that it ought not to be called the Bridge of Sighs, because no record exists of any particular amount of sighing as having been indulged in there; and if you like you may

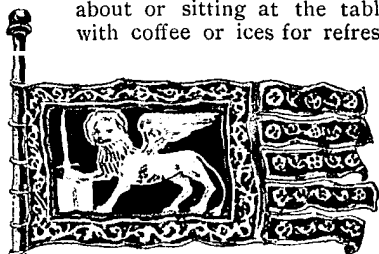
believe him, but my fellow-traveler, countryman of Thomas Moore and Charles Lever, had a more poetic soul, and we never doubted a legend or shattered an ideal.

The Piazza San Marco is the great out-of-door reception-room of Venice, and in the evening, when the *cafés* which surround it are brilliantly illuminated, the band playing in the center, and all Venice,



A GONDOLIER.

rich and poor, soldier and civilian, noble and gondolier, fine lady and poor lace-maker, are sauntering about or sitting at the tables with coffee or ices for refresh-



THE BANNER OF ST. MARK'S.

ment, it is one of the most delightful spots on earth.

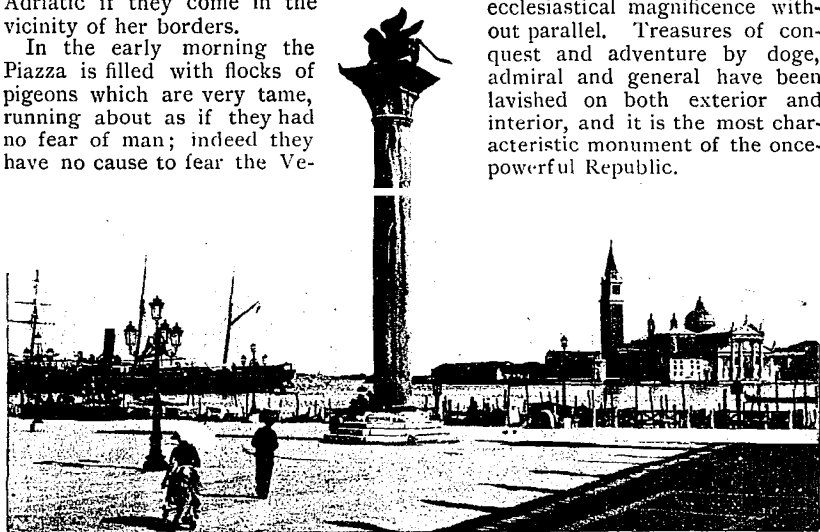
The passing throng is not only interesting because of the changing color and types, but the ear is saluted by scraps of conversation and greetings in half a dozen different tongues. Americans, English, French, Germans, Austrians, Greeks and Italians from the different provinces mingle together here, for few tourists fail to pay their homage to the Queen of the Adriatic if they come in the vicinity of her borders.

In the early morning the Piazza is filled with flocks of pigeons which are very tame, running about as if they had no fear of man; indeed they have no cause to fear the Ve-

netians, for they have been fed for years at the expense of the city, and it is only recently that they have been obliged to depend on chance or charity for their breakfast. We bought little packages of corn from a man whose bearing was not the less that of a proud Venetian because he kept a little stand for the sale of sea-shells and pigeon-feed under the colonnade of St. Mark's; and after scattering the grains about the pavement, in a moment the air about us was filled with busy wings, and holding our hands outstretched, with some corn therein, the pigeons perched on arms, hands and heads, scrambling and fluttering for places where they might gain the best pickings.

The Cathedral of San Marco stands at the end of the Piazza, and while Mr. Ruskin has described this wonderful church in detail and in most exquisite language, even his eloquence fails to prepare one for its richness and beauty.

Portal and column in precious Oriental marbles, shafts of alabaster, ceiling of gold mosaic, the floor another field of tesserae, lamps and candelabra cunningly wrought and ornamented, combine to form a picture of ecclesiastical magnificence without parallel. Treasures of conquest and adventure by doge, admiral and general have been lavished on both exterior and interior, and it is the most characteristic monument of the once-powerful Republic.



THE COLUMN OF ST. MARK'S AND SAN GEORGIO.



DESDEMONA'S HOUSE.

Above the main entrance stand the four bronze horses which, having been brought to Rome by Augustus Cæsar as a decoration for his triumphal arch, served afterward a similar purpose for his successors Nero, Domitian, Trajan and Constantine.

The latter transported them to Byzantium when the Roman Empire was divided, and set them up on the Hip-

podrome of his new capital. When the Venetians and French captured and despoiled Constantinople in 1204 the horses fell to the lot of the former, and having carried them to Venice, they were first placed on the Arsenal and afterward removed to the entrance of St. Mark's. Another and greater conqueror and despoiler came to Venice in the present century, and, curiously, the nation which had assisted the Venetians in the acquisition of these ancient treasures carried them off in turn, and Napoleon the First crowned his Arc de Triomphe at Paris with the bronzes.

Napoleon fell, and in 1815 the Emperor of Austria was present in the Piazza San Marco when the horses were once more placed on their pedestals above the cathedral door; and there they stand to-day with proudly arched necks and lifted hoofs, as if spurning the common gaze, awaiting the coming of the next conqueror.

Beside the cathedral rises the Ducal Palace, hoary with age, beautiful within and without, mysterious and sinister still, although the terrible scenes which have been enacted within and about it have now only a place in history.

In the colonnade which extends along the side next the Piazzetta, two columns and the balustrade between them are of a reddish marble; and from this spot the sentences of death were pronounced before the populace below.

The palace is full of interest, the great saloons decorated in the most sumptuous manner where the Venetian senate and councils sat for centuries, mysterious cabinets and passages eloquent of the days when the Council of Ten ruled patrician and plebeian with a rod of iron, and anonymous accusation, secret tribunals and unrecorded sentences made opinions hazardous and life uncertain.

The "lion's mouth," an aperture opening into the anteroom of the council, is still shown, where information or accusal might be inserted without disclosing the identity of the accuser. Down in the dungeons are stones worn

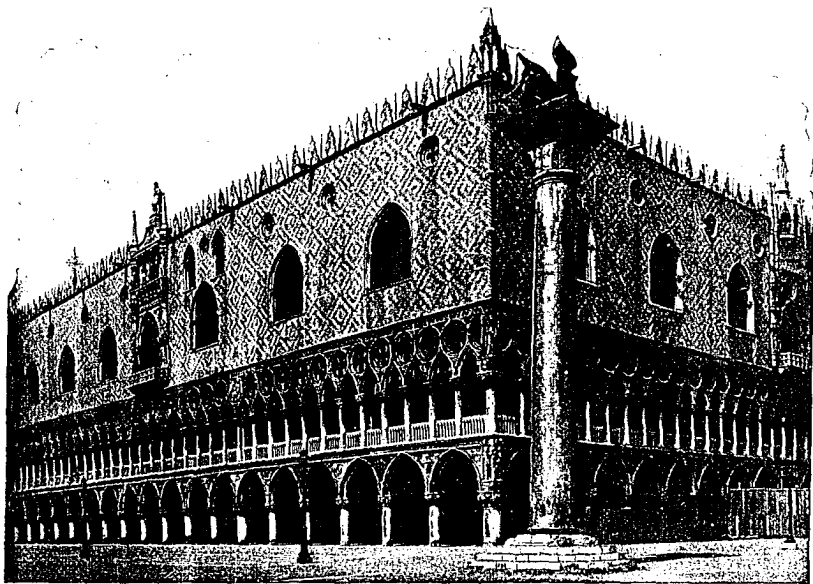
smooth by unhappy prisoners, and despite the magnificence of the building, the sensitive visitor must experience a feeling of oppression because of the dark and bloody deeds which have occurred within these massive walls, and which still seem to exert a psychic influence.

At the end of the Piazzetta, near the water-front of the Palazzo, stand two great granite columns, one crowned by the winged lion of St. Mark, the other by the figure of St. Theodore and the crocodile. There is a legend that when the columns were erected one Barattieri was of great service in the work, and when the shafts were finally in position he was asked to name the reward for his labor. He asked leave to establish gaming-tables on the pavement between them, and although gambling was illegal in Venice at the time, the honor of the Republic could not suffer by a refusal to carry out a promise; but a decree was made providing that in future all public execu-

tions should take place on this spot, and so the schemer was foiled, and presumably was obliged to seek his game in other territory.

The gondoliers await passengers on the water side of the Piazzetta, and while they are sometimes unpleasantly solicitous for custom, it is amusing to watch their frantic efforts to induce Americans or English people to embark in preference to their own countrymen, as they are evidently aware of the proneness of the American to tip extravagantly when he has begun to tip at all. The gondoliers are excellent guides, however, knowing all about everything in Venice, or pretending to knowledge with such success that one never doubts their marvelous descriptions and harrowing details.

On a gondola trip up the Grand Canal the "pape," as the gondolier is called, gave the names of all the palaces on both sides the stream, and as we checked them off on our map we found he had not made a single error.



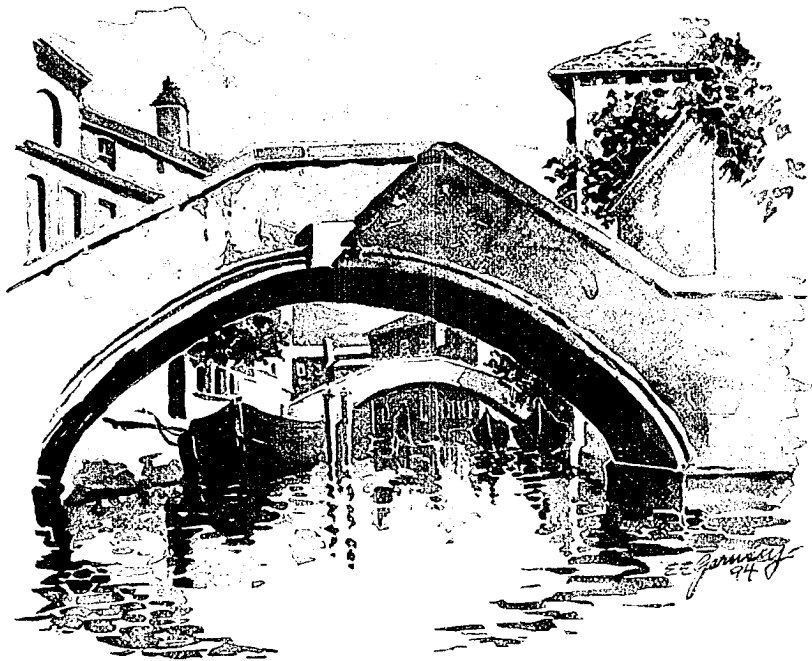
THE PALACE OF THE DOGES.

The "pape" usually curled himself up in the end of the gondola and slept while we sketched, and we enjoyed many delightful hours on canal and rio, too enraptured with the beauty of it all to be critical of anything.

"Santa Lucia" sounded as sweetly

the last evening as on the night we had first heard its melody from the boats on the Grand Canal; and when the train carried us away toward Verona the next morning, we watched the city of the sea fading into the distance with profound regret.

Elmer Ellsworth Garnsey.



A VENETIAN BY-WAY.